

Official Report of the
One Hundred Sixtieth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

March 31 and April 1, 1990

THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 160th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, March 31, 1990 at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, March 31 and April 1, 1990. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, March 31, 1990, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks,

M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the Seventy:
¹Marion D. Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Angel Abrea, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, Gene R. Cook, Derek A. Cuthbert, Jacob de Jager, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jack H. Goaslind, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, H. Burke Peterson, Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Hans B. Ringger, and Robert E. Wells

The Second Quorum of the Seventy:
Carlos H. Amado, H. Verlan Andersen, Eduardo Ayala, Benjamin B. Banks, Monte J. Brough, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, George I. Cannon, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, LeGrand R. Curtis, Clinton L. Cutler, Robert K. Dellenbach, Lloyd P. George, Francis M. Gibbons, F. Melvin Hammond, George R. Hill III, Harold G. Hillam, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, Kenneth Johnson, L. Lionel Kendrick, John R. Lasater, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Helvécio Martins, Gerald E. Melchin, Lynn A. Mickelsen, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Gardner H. Russell, Robert E. Sackley, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Horacio A. Tenorio, J. Ballard Washburn, and Durrell A. Woolsey

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

¹Elder Dean L. Larsen was excused due to illness.

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bish-

ops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 160th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, March 31, 1990, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

To begin the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" without announcement.

President Monson then made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 160th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin, J. Richard Clarke, and Ronald E. Poelman are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except Elder Dean L. Larsen, who is at home recovering from recent surgery. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. This morning we extend a special welcome to distinguished government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

Particularly do we welcome in the translation section the Honorable Gunther Behncke, department head for law and economics in the government office for religious affairs in the German Democratic Republic. Herr Behncke has been most helpful to the Church in our building and our missionary work in the German Democratic Republic. So to you, Herr Behncke, danke schön. Danke schön, mein lieber Bruder. Danke schön mit meinem ganzen Herz.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Rejoice, the Lord Is King." The chorus will now favor us with "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Marion D. Hanks, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

Elder Marion D. Hanks offered the invocation.

President Thomas S. Monson

President Benson has suggested that I commence this conference with a brief message given in his behalf and that I convey to listeners and viewers far and near his greeting, his love, and his blessing.

Changes since last conference

The spirit of spring is very much in evidence here on historic Temple Square. The manicured lawns have discarded their drab winter color and now appear as a carpet of green accentuating the elegant flower beds with their brilliant blooms. It is a period of renewal, a time of gratitude, and a season for reflection.

The world has experienced sweeping changes since last we met. A wall in Berlin has crumbled. Families now may join together on either side and experience the joy they have long been deprived of. In Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic, the bells of freedom have sounded, heralding a new day for our time.

Serving the needs of the world

All of us remember, President Benson, that dark period following World War II when our members were near starvation and bordering on despair. Then you undertook your dramatic assignment to supervise the distribution of food, clothing, and medical supplies from the storehouse of the Church to the war-devastated families in Europe.

Your words, President, echo loud and clear: "We must 'dedicate our strength to serving the needs, rather than the fears, of the world.' . . . I believe errands of mercy, such as the distribution of food, housing, and clothing to those in need, are rendered most effectively when handled by private individuals and organizations such as the Church" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 261).

In the spirit of President Benson's counsel, we have a responsibility to ex-

tend help as well as hope to the hungry, to the homeless, and to the downtrodden both at home and abroad. Such assistance is being provided for the blessing of all. In a host of cities, where need has outdistanced help, lives have been lifted, hearts have been touched, and the frown of despair has been transformed to the smile of confidence, thanks to the generosity of the Church membership in the payment of their fast offerings as the Lord has commanded.

Counsel to the youth of the Church

To the youth of the Church—President Benson has long been your champion and advocate. On a previous occasion he summed up the feelings of all your leaders when he declared, "Beloved youth, you will have your trials and temptations through which you must pass, but there are great moments of eternity which lie ahead. You have our love and our confidence. We pray that you will be prepared for the reins of leadership. We say to you, 'Arise and shine forth' (D&C 115:5) and be a light unto the world, a standard to others" ("To 'The Rising Generation,'" *New Era*, June 1986, p. 8).

My young brothers and sisters, from the days President Benson was a Scoutmaster to the present period of presiding over the entire Church, he has not forgotten you. He rejoices in your achievements; he admires your strengths. He is your friend and your advocate.

Prayer and temple attendance

To the parents of the Church—President Benson has long urged that a good example is the best teacher. I have heard him offer sublime prayers to our Heavenly Father. Simple supplication, generous gratitude mark these petitions. Children joining parents in prayer will tend to be united with their families and found following the teachings of the Lord.

How President Benson and his beloved wife, Flora, enjoy attending the temple each week! His feeling for the temple is found in his statement: "I love the temples of God. This is the closest place to heaven on earth—the house of the Lord" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 253).

We should live in brotherhood

As this conference commences, I join President Benson, and know that I reflect the feelings of President Hinckley and all other General Authorities as well, in declaring our love for Heavenly Father's children everywhere. Perhaps never in history has the need for cooperation, understanding, and goodwill among all people—nations and individuals alike—been so urgent as today. It is not only fitting, it is imperative that we emphasize the ideal of brotherhood and the responsibility true brotherhood confers upon us all.

As Edwin Markham observed:

There is a destiny that makes us
brothers;
None goes his way alone:

All that we send into the lives of
others
Comes back into our own.

We should follow the Savior

Let us live the commandments of God. Let us follow in the footsteps of His Son and our Savior, even Jesus Christ the Lord. As we sincerely and fervently seek Him, we shall indeed find Him.

He may come to us as one unknown, without a name—as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, "Follow thou me" (John 21:22), and sets us to the task which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, and the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship; and they shall learn in their own experience who He is.

I bear to you my witness that God does live, that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, and that we are led today by God's prophet, even President Ezra Taft Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Brothers and sisters, I suppose you are as amazed as I am with the monumental world events that we see unfolding. As Latter-day Saints, we recognize the hand of God working to bring about his purposes in the earth. We know that the "stone [that] was cut out without hands" will continue to roll forth to fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:34–35). These are exciting times to be alive.

Small and simple things shape lives

We observe vast, sweeping world events; however, we must remember that the purposes of the Lord in our personal

lives generally are fulfilled through the small and simple things and not the momentous and spectacular.

Alma, teaching his son Helaman about the importance of the record written on the plates of brass, said:

"Behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.

"And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls" (Alma 37:6–7).

The essentials of the gospel

To illustrate, let me read from a letter written by one of our faithful sister missionaries, serving in South America, to her brother who had just received his mission call. She wrote:

"It's really interesting with the people from the country—they are so quiet, timid, shy, and embarrassed. You are never sure exactly how much they understand. They will live and die in this small town. They are so poor and so simple and so childlike. They may never see a General Authority, never attend general conference, never go to BYU. They'll never be Boy Scouts, never play basketball in a huge church gym, never drive a car to stake conference, regional basketball finals, or anywhere. Many of the things we think about when we think of the Church—and take for granted—they may never see. [Now, the point.] But they have faith, they repent, they are baptized, they receive the Holy Ghost, and they renew their baptismal covenants each week when they partake of the sacrament. They pray and read the scriptures daily. They know God lives and that Christ is our Savior. And, I believe, they are going to the celestial kingdom. I do all the things they never will, but I'm not so sure about my own salvation.

"At first glance, the Church here looks absolutely nothing like the Church in downtown Orem, Utah. I have to keep reminding myself it is the same church and we all follow the same prophet. We have a sacrament meeting in the country each week because the members there really can't afford to come into town. And as I sit there outside on a wooden chair on the plain ground, with the sun setting and the six people in attendance, as we sing hymns, pray, and partake of the sacrament, I wonder if that isn't closer to Christ's church than at home. But I guess it is really the same. The things that matter, the true elements of the gospel as Christ taught in 3 Nephi 11, are the same here as they are in Orem, Utah."

The simplicity of the Spirit

The Lord has graciously provided the means for conversion even in the most simple and humble of circumstances. Unfortunately, some of us look beyond the mark and depend too much on buildings, budgets, programs, and activities for conversion rather than on the small and simple things that are central to the gospel. We need not look beyond our own hearts to experience the sweet spiritual feelings promised to those who obey God. That is why a new member in the most humble conditions can experience the gospel as deeply as a lifetime member who was raised in the shadow of Church headquarters.

As I meet with some of these humble members, I observe that the Church is, by necessity, being established among them in the most simple way possible. The gospel is taught from the scriptures and from the *Gospel Principles* manual. The people feel the Spirit and bear testimonies as they come unto Christ and are baptized in his name. Their love for the Lord radiates from their faces. They know that faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, service to others, and keeping the commandments are the essentials for exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

The simplicity of the Lord's work

Last month, Elder Charles Didier and I visited the Saints and missionaries in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. We dedicated each of these lands for establishing the Lord's work.

We see a vast difference between the humble circumstances in areas where the Church is still in its tender infancy and the circumstances we are accustomed to in areas where the Church is stable and mature.

When we visited Suriname, we met most of the members and learned that the missionary couple serving there, Elder and Sister Limburg, had taught them the gospel using a series of simple teaching

and learning methods. They had no momentous or spectacular events or activities, only daily spiritual experiences resulting from their sensitive response to the promptings of the Spirit.

The simplicity of the sacrament

A new missionary couple, Brother and Sister Don Rapier, arrived in Suriname one day ahead of Elder Didier and me, so they met the Saints for the first time along with us. We held four sacrament meetings in homes of the Saints on the Sunday we were there. Elder Rapier shared his feelings about blessing the sacrament in the humble home of one of our new converts. He said:

"This was the most humble circumstance that I had ever been in in my life. The house was made of mostly short pieces of lumber. No electricity, no running water. The roof was corrugated sheets. The house and the yard were clean. The place where we held our sacrament meeting was under the overhang in front of the house. The members and the Brethren sat on wooden boards that were laid on bricks. The sacrament table was a small wooden stand that was set on top of a piece of linoleum covering the dirt floor. The sacrament cloths were very simple and very clean.

"As I knelt down to bless the sacrament, I was overwhelmed with the spirit of love that I had quickly developed for this people. I thought surely our Savior was pleased that He was being remembered in such humble circumstances. I thought of our chapels at home. I could never have appreciated the sacrament there like I can now after this special experience. I also observed that it might take several years before these sweet, humble members would fully realize the significance of having two General Authorities, one an Apostle, in their home, blessing them and their family."

Brother Rapier's experience touched deeply each one of us who was there. After the fourth sacrament meeting, my mind reflected upon the words of the Lord: "Wherefore, be not weary in well-

doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33).

A box of macaroni

Another example of the importance of small things comes from Elder and Sister Jackson, missionaries serving in Guyana: "When we first arrived in the mission field in Guyana, we saw in the local Georgetown newspaper the report of the 'Teenager of the Month.' In the report he said his favorite food was macaroni. We took the newspaper clipping, a Book of Mormon, and a box of macaroni and knocked on his door. We have taught and baptized seven of the family since our first visit." This small thing resulted in a great benefit in establishing the Church in Guyana.

Simple things can also destroy

While having these tender, spiritual experiences this past month, I was sobered by how small and simple things can be negative and destructive to a person's salvation. A series of seemingly small but incorrect choices can become those little soul-destroying termites that eat away at the foundations of our testimony until, before we are aware, we may be brought near to spiritual and moral destruction.

This past month, one of the missionaries who served with Sister Ballard and me in Canada shared the details of how small things can compound into near destruction unless the course is corrected. He wrote:

"When I returned from my mission, I married and went to work in the construction industry. Over the next few years we had three children, and during this time I remained active in the Church. The demands of my business became much greater, and I became more determined to do whatever it would take to succeed financially. The effects of this were felt immediately at home; but with the support of an understanding wife, we

felt we could endure until things 'picked up.' "

He went on to say that because of financial strains, his wife began working. He began working long hours and neglected his family and Church duties. His demanding work schedule left him emotionally drained and physically exhausted. He became critical of others, including his family members and Church leaders.

His letter continues:

"As my debt continued to mount, the destruction of my peace and happiness increased. The love and tenderness we once knew as husband and wife had diminished to only memories. We found character flaws in each other and began to focus on them, wounding each other over the smallest incident. I began to blame everyone but myself, taking no responsibility for failures. A great feeling of hopelessness began to fill my heart, and I felt a cloud of darkness envelop me in my desperation.

"We knew our marriage could not endure under such conditions and began to talk in terms of divorce. I decided to get some financial counseling; after reviewing my finances, it became the joke that I was worth more dead than alive, which seemed funny and rather innocent at the time. After continuing for a few more weeks, the threat of divorce as well as the very real threat of complete financial collapse seemed only a matter of time. The innocent joke of being worth more dead than alive developed into the appearance of a very real solution. I found myself alone at home, facing the crossroads of my decision. The thought came to me to reach out to the Lord one last time. Kneeling, I wept uncontrollably as I cried to the Lord for his mercy and help in my desperate hour.

"A few minutes later, word came that my mission president was in town and wanted to see me in an hour. As I sat with you, I wanted to hide my problems as I had done from everyone else. But your questions came, asking:

"How are you?"

"Fine."

"How is your wife?"

"Doing good."

"How are the children?"

"Great."

"Then came the pause, and you looked into my eyes and asked, 'How is your business?' I began to weep as I told you my story.

"During the course of our meeting, you asked me to make you a promise: that I would read the Book of Mormon. After committing to you that I would, you blessed me, telling me to rivet myself to the gospel and to keep the commandments. I left you knowing the Lord had heard my plea for help."

Small acts can strengthen others

Can you see, brothers and sisters, how many small and simple things took their toll in the life of this fine young man? Like weak fibers that form a yarn, then a strand, and finally a rope, these small things combined together can become too strong to be broken. We must ever be aware of the power that the small and simple things can have in building spirituality. At the same time, we must be aware that Satan will use small and simple things to lead us into despair and misery.

I am grateful that the Lord answered the prayers of this young man by prompting me to do the seemingly small thing of asking to see him. I did not know of any of his problems at the time but was able to help him to once again take hold of the iron rod of the gospel to guide his life. We must never ignore or pass by the prompting of the Spirit to render service to one another.

Great and marvelous events seem to motivate us, but small things often do not hold our attention. Noting that the Liahona worked by faith, Alma stated, "Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by small means . . . [the people of Lehi] were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey" (Alma 37:41).

Pay attention to the small things

Is our journey sometimes impeded when we forget the importance of small things? (see Alma 37:46). Do we realize that small events and choices determine the direction of our lives just as small helms determine the direction of great ships? (see James 3:4; D&C 123:16). Are we ever like Naaman, the leper, expecting some great thing before we will pay attention to prophets? (see 2 Kings 5:1-14).

May the Lord bless each one of us to follow the counsel of our prophets. We need to have family and personal prayers; study the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon; hold family home evenings; follow the admonition of the Savior to love one another; and be thoughtful, kind, and gentle within the family. Through these and other similar small and simple things, we have the promise that our lives will be filled with peace and joy.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

A "Welcome home" celebration

Several weeks ago in a neighborhood not far from my home, dozens of bright, yellow balloons were seen floating from every tree branch and light post lining a winding, three-block road. It was a beautiful sight on that hazy winter day. Senses were stirred as one drove with anticipation along that friendly, colorful street. Around each bend in the road rose the yellow balloons, waving upward to the top of the hill where a sign warmly proclaimed, "Welcome home, Brigham!" I had heard of Brigham Fordham only a few months ago when I was told of this young eighteen-year-old's tragic accident that left him paralyzed. I only now discovered that this was his home and his homecoming from the hospital.

I noticed the ramp that had been built to the front of the house and thought of other changes that would have been made in his home to accommodate the changes in his life. There will be changes in Brigham's family, too, I thought. Life

I know that Jesus Christ lives and that this is his church. I testify that his gospel will continue to fill the world as it continues to fill the hearts of the individual members of the Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Great King of Heaven" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Great King of Heaven."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy.

will be different for all the Fordhams—and difficult.

But, as the yellow balloons brightly signaled to Brigham and to all who had the opportunity to travel this street, his was a caring home where family love and strength would be found.

The stronghold of the family

Our Heavenly Father has organized us into families for the purpose of helping us successfully meet the trials and challenges of life. The home also exists to bless us with the joys and privileges of family associations. Our family is our safety place, our support network, our sanctuary, and our salvation.

Our homes should be "the strong place to which children can come for the anchor they need in this day of trouble and turmoil," said President Harold B. Lee (*His Servants Speak*, comp. R. Clayton Brough [Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1975], p. 154).

In his book *The Power of the Family*, Dr. Paul Pearsall declares there is a "power of loving energy that flows within every family circle during the joy of the best of times and particularly at times of the sorrow of the worst of times" ([New York: Doubleday, 1990], p. 354).

He states, "No matter what the form of your family, from single-parent household to the largest multi-generation family in your town, your work at keeping families together is the job of saving our world" (Pearsall, p. 351).

Our lives center around the home

The Lord, through His prophets, has taught us of the divine power and influence of the home.

"There is no substitute for the home," said President Joseph F. Smith. "Its foundation is as ancient as the world, and its mission has been ordained of God from the earliest times. . . .

"There can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from the home, and every effort made to sanctify and preserve its influence is uplifting to those who toil and sacrifice for its establishment. . . . There is no happiness without service, and there is no service greater than that which converts the home into a divine institution, and which promotes and preserves family life" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 300).

Surviving the hurricane

On the night of 21 September 1989, Hurricane Hugo passed with all its fury over the beautiful city of Charleston, South Carolina. My good friend Alvie Evans lived in a low-lying area near the water, where the maximum strength of the storm was headed. He gathered his family together and moved to higher ground, to the home of his mother.

Late in the night, 150-mile-per-hour winds raged around them, uprooting trees and ripping away parts of the house. The storm became so severe they began to fear they would experience physical

harm. Alvie, with his wife and children, his mother, and his brothers and sister and their families, knelt together in the entrance hall of the home and prayed humbly to the Lord, asking for protection and for safety.

The next morning they viewed the devastation. Of the fifty or more large, strong oak trees that had been growing in his mother's yard, only eight remained standing. There was damage to the house, the cars, the entire city, but the family was safe. The Lord had heard their prayers and had protected them through the storm. Alvie said, "I didn't know then if we would have a house to return to, but I knew we would always have a home, because our family was intact and secure."

We create homes through love

President David O. McKay once said, "There is nothing temporary in the home of the Latter-day Saint" (in Conference Report, June 1919, p. 77).

He also stated: "[One] may have a beautiful house with all the decorations that modern art can give or wealth bestow. [It] may have all the outward forms that will please the eye and yet not [be] a home. . . . It may be a hovel, a log hut, a tent, a wickiup, if you have the right spirit within, the true love of Christ, and love for one another—fathers and mothers for the children, children for parents, husband and wife for each other—you have the true life of the home that Latter-day Saints build and which they are striving to establish" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], pp. 480–81).

Today, evil forces are challenging the home as never before. If our homes are to endure, parents and children must dedicate themselves to the gospel ideals that ensure preservation of home and family.

Family life comes first

Dr. Pearsall expresses the opinion that families aren't failing, but we are

failing the family because we have not learned how to put family life first in our world.

"Our society is interfering with the family-first feature," he writes. "We are in familial bankruptcy and have fallen into the hands of receivers such as schools, businesses, recreational pursuits, and numerous institutional demands. The issue is not one of setting priorities; the issue is one of making difficult choices for the family. There can only be one number one," he stresses. "Is it your family?" He makes this emphatic statement: "I warn you that if your family does not come first, your family will not last" (Pearsall, p. 18).

In homes where high ideals and gospel values are maintained, it is parents, not teachers, who lay the foundation of character and faith in the hearts of their children. If the training a child should receive in the home is neglected, neither the Church nor the school can compensate for the loss.

Creating gospel-centered homes

In recent instruction from the First Presidency and the Twelve, President Thomas S. Monson pointed out that "the primary responsibility for building testimonies and providing faith-building experiences in our members, including our youth, resides in the home. The Church should continue to support the determination of the family to do this." President Monson encouraged priesthood leaders to "increase their efforts to build strong, gospel-centered homes" (*Ensign*, May 1990, p. 93).

To assist us in this vital endeavor, major changes in Church budgeting policies have been made, which Elder Boyd K. Packer said "will have the effect of returning much of the responsibility for teaching and counseling and activity to the family where it belongs. . . . There will be fewer intrusions into family schedules and in the family purses. Church activities must be replaced by family activities."

Elder Packer closed his instruction by saying, "It is a course correction; it is

an inspired move" (*Ensign*, May 1990, pp. 90-91).

Only when parents and children work together for the same high objective—to put home and family first—can the home be preserved as God intended.

Creating family togetherness

Just a few weeks ago we had a special opportunity for a family get-together. A married daughter and her husband came with their three little boys for a short stay before their move from the East Coast of the United States to the West Coast. Another married daughter and her husband came with their four children from out of town to make it possible for the entire family to be together for a weekend.

On Sunday evening all of our family gathered in our home just to celebrate being together. "All under one roof again," exclaimed my wife. She had planned a special program for the occasion, with the appropriate theme, "Making Memories." She had a recording of one of our daughters singing a song about memories. She had obtained copies of a particular book about the subject as a special gift for each son and daughter. To make the memory of that weekend really complete, there would be a family picture taken. Every detail about the evening had been meticulously planned. It would be certain to create a happy memory for each family member. Or would it?

While the beautiful song played softly in the background, the living room filled with the noise and laughter of our growing family circle. The grandchildren couldn't sit still. They giggled and teased and played happily with each other. The grown-up children enjoyed each other, too, and all talked at once, it seemed, about days gone by and about the future. They laughed with each other and laughed at the antics of their children, who by now were having tickling matches on the floor or sticking little fingers into the chocolate mint cake. It had become frustrating—and funny!

I don't know which was more frustrating or funny—the family program which ended soon after it began, with Bonnie, the would-be “memory-maker,” sighing, “Oh, what’s the use? No one’s listening!” or the photo session, with twelve frenzied adults all trying unsuccessfully to pose eleven overactive, squirming children. Was this a family celebration? Or was it a family circus? One thing I knew, this was not the way Bonnie had intended it to be. She had wanted this time of family gathering to be meaningful and memorable.

Gratitude for family members

A few days after everyone had gone and our house was again very quiet, a little book came for us. It was a picture book about families, and it was inscribed, “To my warm and loving, full-of-fun family—every one of you,” with a special note added for Mom: “Here’s to the wonderful chaos, the wonderful photos, the wonderful gathering place, the wonderful memories you so lovingly help to create each time we’re together.”

Later, this note from another daughter: “Thank you for a wonderful stay. The boys haven’t been this happy in many months. It has been so nice for them to feel so loved and to have a little extra attention and spoiling. I’m so glad we could all watch together as Clark learned to walk, and that he could start forming his special bonds with loving grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Our children couldn’t be more blessed to have such a loving, supportive family network.”

Another daughter wrote this:

If you could see my house of dreams,
No palace would it be
But just where I feel happiest—
You are that home to me.

The bulwark of family unity

Within that “wonderful chaos” of our family all is obviously not perfect. There are problems in our family, as in many families—challenges related to

serious illness, aging parents, schooling, employment, and others. However, individual burdens and concerns may be lightened by the power of a family united in mutual love and support and in prayers of faith.

Following President McKay’s well-known statement “No other success can compensate for failure in the home,” he went on to say: “The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, p. 5).

Our family should be our treasure

On a Sunday morning a few years ago, Donald Pinnell, now president of the Amarillo Texas Stake, was attending church in his branch in Tucumcari when suddenly someone brought him the alarming news, “Brother Pinnell, your home is on fire!”

President Pinnell quickly found his two sons, ages twelve and sixteen, and headed toward his ranch. His first thoughts were of his wife who had stayed home that day recuperating from recent surgery. He had no word about her until the driver of a returning fire truck stopped along the way to tell him she was safe.

Brother and Sister Pinnell had just built their dream home, a Spanish-style house on their ranch fifty miles out in the country. It was a very nice home and a source of great pleasure to their family.

As he and his boys approached the top of the terrain, they could see in the distance the smoke coming from their burning home. Donald Pinnell said of that moment, “We could tell that our home was completely engulfed in flames; and I just stopped the car at the top of the hill for a few minutes. I said to my sons, ‘Now look, you can spend all your life storing up treasures of the earth, and you can sit on a hill and watch them go up in flames, or you can store up the right kind of treasures and take them with you through eternity.’”

The right kind of treasures are our families and those divine attributes and qualities of character that are taught and learned in gospel-centered homes.

May we make the necessary individual and family course corrections which will put the Lord and our families first and fill our homes with these eternal treasures, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

President Benson, who speaks for the Lord to all the world, has challenged us to "live by the Spirit and teach by the Spirit." How many times have we heard him say, "It's the Spirit that counts in this work"? Yes, the Lord's work is spiritual work. It relates to changing lives, developing true values, and overcoming worldly influences.

How to become more spiritual

Over the years, many people, especially youth, have asked me, "Elder Cuthbert, how can I become more spiritual?" My reply has always been the same: "You need to give more service."

Service changes people. It refines, purifies, gives a finer perspective, and brings out the best in each one of us. It gets us looking outward instead of inward. It prompts us to consider others' needs ahead of our own. Righteous service is the expression of true charity, such as the Savior showed.

How, then, does service increase our spirituality? May I share with you briefly ten aspects, from which you can choose those most applicable to your own situation?

Establish righteous values

First, service helps us establish true values and priorities by distinguishing between the worth of material things that pass and those things of lasting, even eternal, value. Our beloved prophet counsels: "If you would find yourself, learn to deny yourself for the blessing of others. Forget yourself and find someone

President Monson

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy.

who needs your service, and you will discover the secret to the happy, fulfilled life" (Ezra Taft Benson, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1979, p. 48; or *Ensign*, May 1979, p. 34). We have a lovely sister who is living by us who has been confined to a wheelchair for twenty-seven years; she truly forgets herself in service to others as she gives firesides and helps wherever she can with a cheerful smile and a positive attitude.

Second, service helps us establish a righteous tradition. This is so necessary, particularly among young people. Wise parents will provide service opportunities in the home for their children from an early age. Growing up with this tradition will blossom into community service and Church service. It will develop a spirit of volunteerism in a world where people more often ask, "What's in it for me?" The Lord has counseled:

"For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; . . .

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:26-27).

As I travel to stake conferences I am delighted to hear of youth service projects of various kinds such as baptismal work in the temple, community cleanup efforts, and youth missions during vacation time. This is the way we shall save the rising generation from becoming a totally selfish, indulgent generation. We shall not save them by providing fun activities which are inward-looking.

Overcome and repent from sin

Third, service helps us overcome selfishness and sin. Have you ever realized that all sin is selfish, whether it be lying, cheating, stealing, immorality, covetousness, or idleness? Sin is for one's own ends, not another's—certainly not for the Lord's ends. Service, on the other hand, is unselfish and constitutes a positive power for good.

Anciently Isaiah lamented, "We have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). In modern parlance, they "did their own thing," whatever the adverse effect upon others. Even many of those who profess to understand free agency, or moral agency, turn liberty to license, as we can see all around us.

Fourth, not only does service overcome selfishness and sin, but it helps to recompense for sin. The prophet Ezekiel explained this when he declared, "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right" (Ezekiel 33:16). Again, James taught that to "save a soul . . . shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). We can express regret and feel remorse for things done wrong, but *full* repentance should include recompense such as service gives.

Show love and gratitude

Fifth, service helps us generate love and appreciation. We come to know people by serving them—their circumstances, their challenges, their hopes and aspirations. My wife and I have the privilege of visiting some widowed sisters who have become dear friends. What a blessing for us to learn of their missions and temple service and now family record extraction service, unselfishly performed despite many trials and heartaches.

Sixth, service is the principal way of showing gratitude to the Savior. We need to fill ourselves up with gratitude for His redeeming love, His infinite atoning sacrifice, His obedience to the will of the Father. As we become full of gratitude, it

overflows into service, and "inasmuch as [we] have done it unto one of the least of these [His] brethren, [we] have done it unto [Him]" (Matthew 25:40).

Perform Christlike acts

Seventh, service channels our desires and energies into righteous activity. Every son and daughter of God is a storehouse—even a powerhouse—of desires and energies, which may be used for good or evil. This great potential needs to be harnessed to bring blessings to others. I think of a group of young people who saw a film on famine in Africa and organized a charity concert to help those in need. I think of tens of thousands of Church members who responded to the First Presidency's call for a special fast. This year's famine and destitution is expected to be even worse in Africa, and again we need to prioritize the use of our resources in the Lord's own way—not only for those in distant lands, but for the poor in our own communities.

Eighth, service helps us cleanse ourselves and become purified and sanctified. Not being perfect, are we not all sinners? Yes, we all need the redeeming and atoning blood of Christ to purge us of our sins. How is this accomplished? The way is through Christlike service, as expressed by the prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola, which I learned in my youth:

To give and not to count the cost;

To fight and not to heed the wounds; . . .

To labor and not ask for any reward
Save that of knowing that we do Thy will. ["Prayer for Generosity, 1548," in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968), p. 180b]

Know and follow the Savior

Ninth, charitable service helps us do as the Savior did, for was not His whole ministry one of reaching out and helping, lifting and blessing, loving and caring?

Jesus declares, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27), and again, "For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness" (D&C 100:16). There are good people everywhere giving charitable service. Once, when we were visiting our missionaries and members in Nigeria, our vehicle broke down on a lonely road. Finally a car approached, and two young Nigerians got out. "The Lord told us to stop and help you," they said. Help us they did, for they knew what the Lord would have them do. And so it should be with us.

Tenth, service helps us to get to know the Savior, for "how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served?" (Mosiah 5:13). As we immerse ourselves in the service of others, we find our spiritual selves and come unto Him. I was impressed while visiting the California Sacramento Mission a few months ago to meet a young, blind missionary elder. He had completely immersed himself in missionary service, despite his special needs, and his spirit shone through.

In all of these ways, righteous service brings us nearer to Christ, increases our spirituality, and brings others likewise. Such service is helping to prepare a people worthy, in the Lord's due time, to redeem Zion.

Bear one another's burdens

As some of you may know, just after last October general conference it was discovered that I had been seriously stricken with cancer, which was in its last stage. May I express my love and

gratitude for the prayers and blessings and loving concern on my behalf which have brought about a miracle of recovery. As I give thanks for each new day of life, I express gratitude for the opportunities of service—past, present, and future.

The wonderful thing about service is that there is no end to it. As President Benson says, "Therefore, let us serve one another with brotherly love, never tiring of the demands upon us, being patient and persevering and generous" (*So Shall Ye Reap* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], pp. 173-74).

Yes, as we give Christlike service, it helps us grow spiritually. "[Put] off the natural man and [become] a saint" (Mosiah 3:19)—that is, one who is honestly trying to follow the Savior and do what He would want us to do. What a marvelous feeling it is to have the Spirit of the Lord poured out more abundantly upon us as we bear one another's burdens and share with and mourn with those in need (see Mosiah 18:8-10).

May this be our happy lot, I humbly pray, bearing my personal witness of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, His restored church, and His living prophet, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Thank you, Elder Cuthbert.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God," following which we shall hear from Elder Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy.

The chorus and congregation sang "The Spirit of God."

Elder Richard P. Lindsay

This past year has given me a new vision of the Savior's words as recorded in Matthew:

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the

least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37-40).

Christlike love and service

In visits to more than thirty stakes of Zion during the past year, my life has been blessed and my faith has been increased as I have observed and experienced the Christlike love and the quiet, unheralded service demonstrated in the lives of countless true Latter-day Saints.

Such examples of charity, the pure love of Christ, are not restricted to geographic location, age, gender, or station in life. Such acts of kindness and love of fellowman seek no praise or reward and are often performed within the humble homes and from the loving hearts of the Lord's devoted servants.

Permit me to recount a few such examples from the lives of true followers of Christ.

A strength for missionaries

In an early stake conference assignment, Elder Paramore and I were blessed to visit the home of a dear brother who, in a tragic industrial accident on 26 August 1958, fell from a cooling tower into a hole thirty-five feet below, where he landed on his head and became paralyzed from the shoulders down. In the intervening thirty-one years he has survived as one of the longest-living quadriplegics in medical history. He was unable to attend the conference meetings, but a brief, thoughtfully prepared video of his life and testimony was presented in the Saturday evening session of conference. He lies not in a bed but suspended on a circular metal rack, where he has received devoted nursing care twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, since this accident more than thirty-one years ago.

This brother, whose home we visited following the conference, praised his nurses, his priesthood leaders, his home teachers, and many others who during those long years stood by his side and ministered to his spiritual and temporal needs. A wise stake president had called

him to be the regular correspondent to the missionaries and the servicemen from his stake. I have been inspired many times as I have read his letters sent to bolster the faith of choice young missionaries across the world.

May I quote two lines from one of these missionary letters: "Christ is the only way to heaven. All other paths are detours to doom. Commitment to Christ should go hand in hand with commitment to His church."

Love and faith in adversity

In another stake, in a Sunday morning Primary meeting of that stake conference, I met two beautiful daughters of a faithful young Latter-day Saint physician and his devoted wife. The older child was in a wheelchair, and the younger child moved with great effort. Both of these children suffer from a degenerative disease of genetic origin thought to be progressive and incurable. According to medical wisdom, their time in this life is extremely limited. Their eyes were beautiful and clear—full of faith and love of their Savior, whose presence had been made real in their lives by loving parents and grandparents and devoted Church teachers.

To fulfill a deep desire for more children, their devoted parents have adopted two other beautiful daughters from another country. Instead of cursing God as Job was encouraged by his associates to do in the face of other faith-testing burdens, this couple has reached out to these two beautiful additional daughters, who now feel the blessing of being reared in a household of faith with love from parents whose hearts and lives demonstrate the pure love of Christ.

Following a recent stake conference, Sister Lindsay and I were blessed to visit another household of faith located in rural Idaho. The young father in this home was suffering from a critical illness. A picture forever etched in my memory is of a mother and five beautiful children, together with this dear brother's priesthood quorum leaders, kneeling

around his bedside pleading with Heavenly Father for the life of this good man. He was then administered to within this circle of faith. It was our blessing recently again to meet this young couple and to hear their beautiful witnessing, their humble outpouring of spirit, of the Lord's blessing in the restoration of the husband's health.

In yet another stake conference, a dear sister confined to a wheelchair testified of the strength that she had received from feeling the Lord's love through reading the Book of Mormon. Earlier her devoted husband had been able to help her adjust to the crippling effects of her illness. Now he was bedridden, and she spoke of her gratitude that the Lord had empowered her with greater strength to be more self-reliant and better care for her own needs. She had even been given additional strength to minister to the many needs of her dear companion, who now tenderly cared for her and had done so for so many years. Loving family and Church associates had also been helpful so that the couple were able to remain in their own home with precious memories of earlier happy family associations.

We meet each other's needs

It was President Kimball who said, "The Lord answers our prayers, but it is usually through another person that he meets our needs." An incident in the latter part of President Kimball's ministry helped me to better understand his message and the way his own life witnessed to the truthfulness of his inspired counsel.

As a stake president during this period, I went to a local hospital to visit a dear sister suffering with a terminal illness. More than forty years earlier, I had attended school with both this sister and her husband, who had been childhood sweethearts. But they had not been blessed with children of their own, and they had filled this void by his serving as a Scout leader—and his loving companion as the "Scout mother"—to scores of young boys over a generation.

As I approached the hospital that day, my heart was heavy with foreboding for what lay ahead in the lives of this choice couple. For weeks this dear brother had stayed with his companion at the hospital day and night to give comfort and ease her burden and the pain of her suffering.

As I reached the door of her hospital room that day, I met my friend emerging from his wife's room into the hallway. Unlike my earlier visits, when his countenance reflected the weight of their ordeal, this time his face was radiant and his eyes were aglow. Before I could utter a word, he said, "You will never guess what just happened. As my wife and I were feeling so burdened, into our room came President Kimball"—himself a patient at the hospital, where he had recently undergone surgery. "He prayed with us and he blessed us, and it was as though the Savior himself had come to lift our burdens." Many other patients in that hospital, I might add, experienced a similar blessing from one who knew so much of pain and suffering.

Lifelong acts of charity

In my own life I have experienced much of the Savior's love through the kindness and goodness of many of the Lord's servants. With King Benjamin I acknowledge that if we were to serve the Savior with all our souls, yet we would be unprofitable servants (see Mosiah 2:21). And this because of His great love and atoning sacrifice for each of His children.

Some months ago a ninety-year-old patriarch and dear friend of my own father was quietly laid to rest in this valley. My father passed away during the height of the Great Depression in 1932, and ten days later my oldest brother, age fourteen, died. During forty-seven years of my mother's widowhood, this gentle man frequently visited our fatherless family to give wise counsel and encouragement and priesthood blessings. His example and personal concern, coupled with the goodness of many other priesthood lead-

ers and loving neighbors, helped my mother and her five remaining children face the problems of economic depression and wars and the many worldly influences and daily challenges with which each of us must cope. His life in many ways touched scores of others in similar circumstances.

To me he was the epitome of the "pure religion" described in the epistle of James: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

In these challenging times, dear brothers and sisters, the need to "minister unto the least of these" of our Father's children is so great (see Matthew 25:40). How much we need the gifts of discernment and wisdom and charity to know how to really reach down and lift up our brothers and sisters to higher ground.

I pray that day by day we will strive more diligently to be about our Father's business (see Luke 2:49); to love and serve our fellowmen by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and comforting those that mourn (see Matthew 25:37-39); to hold up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees (see D&C 81:5); to believe and live the Savior's doctrine; and to follow after Him and put first in our lives the things of His kingdom. And for this I humbly pray, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy has spoken to us.

It will now be our opportunity to hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Today I would like to speak about a name. We are all pleased when our names are pronounced and spelled correctly. Sometimes a nickname is used instead of the real name. But a nickname may offend either the one named or the parents who gave the name.

The name of which I shall speak is not a personal name, yet the same principles apply. I refer to a name given by the Lord:

"Thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (D&C 115:4).

Note carefully the language of the Lord. He did not say, "Thus shall my church be *named*." He said, "Thus shall my church be *called*." Years ago members were cautioned by the Brethren, who wrote, "We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term 'Mormon Church'." (*Member-Missionary Class, Instructor's Guide* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], p. 2). Before any other name is considered to be a legitimate substitute, the thoughtful person

might reverently consider the feelings of the Heavenly Parent who bestowed that name.

Surely every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord is precious. So each word in this name must be important—divinely designated for a reason. If we study the key words in that name, we can better understand the name's full significance.

Saints

The last word in the title is *Saints*. I smile when I remember a comment made after my call to the Quorum of the Twelve. A doctor friend relayed a report made at a professional meeting that "Dr. Nelson was no longer practicing cardiac surgery because his church had made him 'a saint.'"

Such a comment was not only amusing but revealing. It evidenced unfamiliarity with the language of the Bible, in which the word *saint* is used much more frequently than is the term *Christian*.

The word *Christian* appears in only three verses of the King James Version

of the Bible. One verse describes the historical fact that "disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26); another quotes a sarcastic nonbeliever, King Agrippa (see Acts 26:28); and the third indicates that one known as "a Christian" must be prepared to suffer (1 Peter 4:16).

In contrast, the term *saint* (or *saints*) appears in thirty-six verses of the Old Testament and in sixty-two verses of the New Testament.

Paul addressed an epistle "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1).

To recent converts there he said, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19; see also Ephesians 3:17-19).

In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul used the word *saint* at least once in every chapter.

Despite its use in ninety-eight verses of the Bible, the term *saint* is still not well understood. Some mistakenly think that it implies beatification or perfection. Not so! A saint is a believer in Christ and knows of His perfect love. The giving saint shares in a true spirit of that love, and the receiving saint accepts in a true spirit of gratitude. A saint serves others, knowing that the more one serves, the greater the opportunity for the Spirit to sanctify and purify.

A saint is tolerant and is attentive to the pleadings of other human beings, not only to spoken messages but to unspoken messages as well. A saint is different from an individual whose response to a concern might be a selfish "What do I care" attitude. A real saint responds, "What? I *do* care!" *Do* is an action verb, and it becomes the driving force in the reply of one who will care for another in need (see 1 Corinthians 12:25-27; 2 Corinthians 7:12).

A saint "refrain[s] from idleness" (Alma 38:12) and seeks learning by study and also by faith. Education not only helps in communication with others, it enables one to discern truth from error,

particularly through studying the scriptures (see D&C 88:118).

A saint is honest and kind, paying financial obligations promptly and fully, treating others as she or he would want to be treated (see Matthew 7:12; 3 Nephi 14:12; D&C 112:11).

A saint is an honorable citizen, knowing that the very country which provides opportunity and protection deserves support, including prompt payment of taxes and personal participation in its legal political process (see D&C 134:5).

A saint resolves any differences with others honorably and peacefully and is constant in courtesy—even in traffic at the rush hour.

A saint shuns that which is unclean or degrading and avoids excess even of that which is good.

Perhaps above all, a saint is reverent. Reverence for the Lord, for the earth He created, for leaders, for the dignity of others, for the law, for the sanctity of life, and for chapels and other buildings are all evidences of saintly attitudes (see Leviticus 19:30; D&C 107:4; 134:7).

A reverent saint loves the Lord and gives highest priority to keeping His commandments. Daily prayer, periodic fasting, and payment of tithes and offerings are privileges important to a faithful saint.

Finally, a saint is one who receives the gifts of the Spirit that God has promised to all His faithful sons and daughters (see Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18).

Latter-day

The term *latter-day* is an expression especially difficult for translators who labor in languages in which there is not a good equivalent term. Some translations may suggest *last day*.

It is true that scriptures foretell the final days of the earth's temporal existence as a telestial sphere. The earth will then be renewed and receive its paradisiacal, or terrestrial, glory (see Articles of Faith 1:10). Ultimately, the earth will become celestialized (see Revelation 21:1; D&C 77:1; 88:25-26). But its *last* days must be preceded by its *latter* days!

We live in those latter days, and they are really remarkable. The Lord's Spirit is being poured out upon all inhabitants of the earth, precisely as the Prophet Joel foretold. His prophecy was of such significance that the angel Moroni reaffirmed it to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Joel 2:28-32; Joseph Smith—History 1:41).

For millennia, methods of farming, travel, and communication were largely unchanged from ancient techniques. Developments since the birth of Joseph Smith, however, have risen in remarkable contrast.

Joseph Smith had long been foreordained as God's prophet for the restoration of the gospel in the fulness of times (see 2 Nephi 3:7-15). Twenty-five years after his birth, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was officially organized.

Later in that same century, the telegraph was developed, the Atlantic Ocean was first crossed by a steamship, and the telephone, the automobile, and motion pictures were invented.

The twentieth century has been even more extraordinary. Farming has become mechanized.

Modern transportation allows travel to nearly any destination in the world within a day or two.

Computers have been developed that allow the Church to serve living members and to organize information relative to progenitors who live on the other side of the veil. People throughout the world, once little concerned with family history, now search for roots of their ancestral heritage using technologies unavailable a century ago.

Long-distance telephone, telefax, radio, television, and satellite communications have become routine. In these latter days it is possible for the word of the Lord to be broadcast from world headquarters of His Church and heard in the most remote areas of the globe.

The divine promise is being fulfilled that this restored gospel "shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (D&C 133:37).

Political changes have occurred recently in many countries. Previous restrictions of personal liberties have been relieved. The shell of spiritual confinement has been shattered. Swelling shouts of freedom fill the air. Surely the hand of the Lord is apparent. He said, "I will hasten my work in its time" (D&C 88:73), and that time of hastening is now.

Jesus Christ

By divine directive, the title of the Church bears the sacred name of Jesus Christ, whose church this is (see D&C 115:3-4). He so decreed more than once. Nearly two thousand years ago, the Lord said,

"Ye shall *call* the church in my name; . . .

"And how be it my church save it be *called* in my name?" (3 Nephi 27:7-8; italics added).

We worship God the Eternal Father in the name of His Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. We know the premortal Jesus to be Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. We know Him to be "the chief corner stone" upon which the organization of His church is based (Ephesians 2:20). We know Him to be the Rock from whom revelation comes to His authorized agents (see 1 Corinthians 10:4; Helaman 5:12) and to all who worthily seek Him (see D&C 88:63).

We know that He came into the world to do the will of His Father, who sent Him (see 3 Nephi 27:13). His divine mission was to effect the Atonement, which was to break the bands of death and enable us to receive immortality and eternal life.

The living Lord's divine mission still continues. One day we will stand before Him in judgment. He has foretold that event:

"Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world" (27:16).

We revere the name of Jesus Christ. He is our risen Redeemer.

The Church

The first two words of the name the Lord chose for His earthly organization are *The Church*.

Note that the article *The* begins with a capital letter. This is an important part of the title, for the Church is the official organization of baptized believers who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ (see D&C 10:67-69; 18:21-25).

The foundation of the Church is the reality that God is our Father and that His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the Savior of the world. The witness and inspiration of the Holy Ghost confirm those realities.

The Church is the way by which the Master accomplishes His work and bestows His glory. Its ordinances and related covenants are the crowning rewards of our membership. While many organizations can offer fellowship and fine instruction, only His church can provide baptism, confirmation, ordination, the sacrament, patriarchal blessings, and the ordinances of the temple—all bestowed by authorized priesthood power. That power is destined to bless *all* children of our Heavenly Father, regardless of their nationality:

"The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth" (D&C 65:2; see also Daniel 2:37-45; D&C 109:72).

Admission into His church is by baptism. This sacred ordinance is reserved only for children after they reach the age of accountability and for adults who are truly converted, prepared, and worthy to pass this scriptural test:

"Ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

"Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and

in all things, and in all places that ye may be in" (Mosiah 18:8-9).

Through the ordinance of baptism, we take upon ourselves the name of the Lord and covenant to be saints in these latter days. We covenant to live by the doctrines of the Church as recorded in sacred scriptures and as revealed to prophets, ancient and modern.

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9).

These revelations include fundamental truths essential to our everlasting happiness and joy. They teach of priorities with eternal potential such as love of God, family, mother, father, children, and home; self-mastery; care of the poor and needy; service; and thoughtful consideration for others.

This church, established under the direction of Almighty God, fulfills promises made in biblical times. It is part of the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It has been restored and given a name by the Lord Himself.

He issued this solemn warning: "Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips" (D&C 63:61). "Remember," He added, "that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care" (D&C 63:64). Therefore, just as we revere His holy name, we likewise revere the name that He decreed for His church.

As members of His church, we are privileged to participate in its divine destiny. May we so honor Him who declared, "Thus shall my church be called . . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "O Divine Redeemer" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson has addressed us, followed by the choir's singing "O Divine Redeemer," a favorite

number of our prophet and of many of us.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Thank you, Brother Bowden, for that beautiful number. That's a difficult one to follow.

Freedom is a spiritual need

The prophets have taught us that before the world was, there was a council in heaven. President Brigham Young instructed the Saints:

"The Council . . . said, 'Let there be an earth, and let there be a firmament above and beneath it,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be heat and cold,' and it was so. They said, 'Let there be spring and summer, autumn and winter,' and it was so.

"'Who will redeem the earth, who will go forth and make the sacrifice for the earth and all things it contains?' The Eldest Son said: 'Here am I'; and then he added, 'Send me.' But the second one, which was 'Lucifer, [a] Son of the Morning,' said, 'Lord, here am I, send me, I will redeem every son and daughter of Adam and Eve that lives on the earth, or that ever goes on the earth.' 'But,' says the Father, 'that will not answer at all. I give [unto] each and every individual his agency; all must use that in order to gain exaltation in my kingdom; inasmuch as they have the power of choice they must exercise that power. They are my children; the attributes which you see in me are in my children and they must use their agency. If you undertake to save all, you must save them in unrighteousness and corruption'" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], pp. 53-54).

As these spirits have come forth from the council in heaven to take their "turn on earth," they are still desiring

their free agency, and, in fact, they are willing to sacrifice for that freedom. We are witnessing today remarkable events occurring throughout the world: evidence of the strength of man's desire for freedom. The history of man's mortal experience would indicate that the desire to be free has spiritual roots.

There is an innate, overwhelming, compelling desire to be free. This desire seems to be more precious than life itself.

The Lord tells us how to be free

Another desire we carry from the preexistence is to know who we are and where we came from and what our opportunities are in this great eternal plan. Answers to these questions can really only be found in the gospel of our Lord and Savior.

As we hear the cries for help from those who are just now trying to deal with their newly found freedom, trying to use it and understand it, we can turn to the scriptures and read how the Lord prepared another nation for their freedom.

The scriptures record that Israel had lived in the land of Egypt for 430 years. For a time they had prospered under the leadership of Joseph. The account reads:

"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

"And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

"Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Exodus 1:6-10).

Then the narrative continues to tell how the Israelites were placed in bondage and became slaves to the Egyptians. Moses was raised up, trained, and charged with the responsibility of freeing them from bondage and leading them to their own promised land. His task was difficult, for Israel had lived about two centuries in slavery; they had been taught many of the idolatrous practices prominent in the land in that day. It would have been impossible for Moses to lead his people without the direction of the Lord.

The Israelites built a tabernacle

As a way of rebuilding their faith and reminding them who was their true God, Moses was instructed to establish certain principles and practices with them to help them return to the true doctrine. First, the Lord directed them to construct a tabernacle, which would be moved about with them from place to place as they journeyed towards their promised land. This was to be a house of worship, where their sacred observances could be held. It was to be used by those who were willing to abide by the Lord's law.

When the children of Israel were disobedient, the privilege of enjoying the blessings of having the tabernacle in their midst was removed from them. We read:

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp" (Exodus 33:7).

When the children of Israel again found favor in the sight of the Lord, the tabernacle was moved with them from

place to place as they went about their quest for the promised land. It led them by day and was their security by night.

Later, when they reached their homeland, King Solomon built a magnificent temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem where they could continue to enjoy an official house of worship. Israel worshipped in Solomon's Temple for 350 years. But they failed to be faithful, and dissension caused conflict in the tribes. This so weakened Israel that when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made war on them, he was able to defeat them and looted the temple and destroyed it. Israel lost not only their place of worship but many also lost their homes when Nebuchadnezzar carried the people to Babylonia as his captives.

Ways Israel kept close to God

In addition to the tabernacle as a place of worship, the Lord gave Israel His written law contained on tablets of stone. These commandments were written by the finger of the Lord. They were kept for guidance and direction. The Ten Commandments were the basis of Hebrew law. Four of them have to do with our attitude toward God; the remaining six with our attitude toward our fellowman. Reverence for God was a basis for the Ten Commandments. Here was a foundation on which to build a society of law and order.

The Lord had another way of reminding Israel of the blessings He had given them. He had them establish religious customs, which became a part of their everyday life, to signify the ways through which they could express their faith in God. Israel refused to abandon these practices even after being taken into captivity. They conceived that God's dominion was not limited by national or political boundaries, and they would not give up their faith even though they struggled in a strange land. Deprived of their temple, they still had their law and their religious customs to worship their God.

We must be examples of freedom

Now, most of us will not be called to help nations organize newly found freedoms, but all of us can be involved by making certain the light of freedom burns brightly within our own souls. We can be certain that, by our actions, we are examples of how freedom should be enjoyed.

Following the pattern that He established for ancient Israel, the Lord has commanded us to build houses of worship for the purpose of having a place where the gospel can be taught. After understanding is achieved, we can enter into covenants with Him to be obedient to His will and, in turn, receive His promised blessings as a result of our faithfulness. We have temples—they now dot the maps of nations—where the worthy can enter, worship, be taught, and make covenants to serve God and abide by His law.

Freedom comes from obeying laws

From the very beginning of man's existence on earth, he has been taught that he must be obedient to law:

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20–21).

Prophets through the ages have taught us to be obedient to the laws of the Lord. These laws are the foundation of our existence here and will bring order out of chaos.

President Wilford Woodruff once taught us:

"The God of heaven, who created this earth and placed his children upon it, gave unto them a law whereby they might be exalted and saved in a kingdom of glory. For there is a law given unto all kingdoms, and all things are governed by law throughout the whole universe. Whatever law anyone keeps, he is pre-

served by that law, and he receives whatever reward that law guarantees unto him. It is the will of God that all his children should obey the highest law, that they may receive the highest glory that is ordained for all immortal beings. But God has given all his children an agency, to choose what law they will keep" (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 10).

We should create our own traditions

The Lord has not been so explicit in providing us religious customs along the order of feasts and festivals to remind us of the blessings we receive from Him today. However, the practice of having traditions to keep us close to the great heritage which is ours to enjoy should be something every family should try to keep alive.

Daily we should kneel in family prayer and study the scriptures together. Weekly we should observe the Sabbath day by attending our meetings, especially sacrament meeting, and behaving appropriately in activities that are proper for the Lord's day. We should also gather our families together in weekly family home evenings. Perhaps it would also be appropriate to have a date with our wives each week to remind us of the great blessing they are in our lives. Monthly we should fast and pay our tithes and offerings to the Lord. Semiannually we should make listening to the messages delivered at general conference a family tradition. We should organize, annually, family reunions to keep alive our great gospel heritage.

Other traditions which should continually be part of our lives are receiving father's blessings and patriarchal blessings, missionary preparation, temple preparation and regular temple attendance where possible, and being together as family units on those occasions when sacred ordinances are performed in behalf of a family member.

If we will build righteous traditions in our families, the light of the gospel

can grow ever brighter in the lives of our children from generation to generation. We can look forward to that glorious day when we will all be united together as eternal family units to reap the everlasting joy promised by our Eternal Father to His righteous children.

Our family activities and traditions can be a beacon to the rest of the world as an example of how we should live to merit His choice blessings and live in peace and harmony until the day that He returns to rule and reign over us.

This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged. God lives! Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, is my solemn witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many television and radio stations and cable and satellite systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The chorus will now sing "Come, Rejoice," and the benediction will be given by Elder Douglas H. Smith of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang "Come, Rejoice."
Elder Douglas H. Smith offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 160th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, March 31, 1990, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region. Glenda C. Nordfelt conducted, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you in this the second general session of the 160th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio and many who are watching in stake centers in various parts of the world where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation and generosity in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

Elders Dallin H. Oaks, Hartman Rector, Jr., and F. Burton Howard are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region under the direction of Sister Glenda C. Nordfelt, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will open this meeting by singing "A Child's Prayer." The invocation will be offered by Elder James M. Paramore of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir sang "A Child's Prayer."

Elder James M. Paramore offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

It is a beautiful spring day here in the valleys of the mountains, and it is beautiful on Temple Square with a great

array of flowers as we go forward with this conference.

The children's choir will now sing "On a Golden Springtime" followed by "Love One Another." We shall ask then that President Monson present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "On a Golden Springtime" and "Love One Another."

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Thomas S. Monson

As requested by President Benson and announced by President Hinckley, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Opposed, if any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities of the Church as presently constituted with the following additional brethren as new members

of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Eduardo Ayala, LeGrand R. Curtis, Clinton L. Cutler, Robert K. Dellenbach, Harold G. Hillam, Kenneth Johnson, Helvécio Martins, Lynn A. Mickelsen, J. Ballard Washburn, and Durrel A. Woolsey. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

We release with our heartfelt thanks Brother David M. Kennedy, who has served as special representative of the First Presidency since 1974, and Brother Blaine C. Tueller, who has served as his assistant. Those who wish to join us in this expression of appreciation, please manifest it.

Sister Barbara W. Winder has accepted a call to accompany her husband, Richard, to his assignment as president of the Czechoslovakia Prague Mission. It is therefore necessary to release her as general president of the Relief Society. We also release her counselors, Joy F. Evans and Joanne B. Doxey, and all members of the Relief Society general board. In addition, we release Sister Elaine L. Jack as second counselor in the Young Women General Presidency. All who wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these sisters for their excellent service may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain Sister Elaine Low Jack as general president of the Relief Society with Chieko N. Okazaki as first counselor and Aileen H. Clyde as second counselor. Those in

favor please manifest it. Any opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as second counselor in the Young Women General Presidency Sister Janette C. Hales. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other general officers of the Church as presently constituted. Those in favor please manifest it. Opposed, if any, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative.

We invite the newly called members of the Seventy and general women's

presidencies to take their places on the stand at this time.

President Hinckley

While these brothers and sisters are coming up, may I say that all of this is indicative of the tremendous vitality and growth of the Church across the world.

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1989.

The Church Audit Committee Report for 1989

Wilford G. Edling

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1989, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

Expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, as prescribed under revelation of the Lord. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which is composed of a staff of certified public accountants and similarly qualified auditors, is independent of all other departments and performs financial audits,

operational audits, and audits of the computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for the Church departments and other controlled organizations of the Church engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and the Auditing departments, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all material respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1989, have

been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Audit Committee

Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

The Church Statistical Report for 1989

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1989. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1989 reports available prior to conference.)

Church units

Number of stakes 1,739
Number of districts 432
Number of missions 228
Number of wards 11,536
Number of branches 5,769
Number of nations and territories
with organized wards or
branches 128

(These statistics reflect an increase of 32 stakes and 747 wards and branches during 1989.)

Church membership

Total membership at the close
of 1989 7,300,000

Children of record baptized..... 75,000
Converts baptized..... 318,940

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries 39,739

Prominent members who have passed away since last April

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Emeritus General Authority; Sister Lois A. Kjar Brown, wife of Elder Victor L. Brown, Emeritus General Authority; Marianne Clark Sharp, former counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Edling and Brother Watson, for that significant information. Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker at this session, and he will be followed by Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy.

Elder David B. Haight

We have just had the privilege of sustaining, with our uplifted hands and deep affection, Ezra Taft Benson as God's living prophet; his inspired counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators; and the other General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And, of course, we acknowledge those other changes made in the auxiliary organizations. We have

heard the statistical report indicating a continuing worldwide growth of the Church, with its stabilizing influence, which is the product of the inspired doctrine and policies of the Church.

The growth of God's work

In a recent article, a non-Latter-day Saint scholar gave a fresh and most interesting review of this Church and its un-

predicted growth since its restoration 160 years ago. He described its growth as a "miracle" and an "incredibly rare event" (Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research*, Sept. 1984, p. 18).

In 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith, in answer to an inquiry from the editor of a Chicago newspaper, made the prophetic declaration that "the truth of God will go forth boldly, . . . till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

God's hand in Eastern Europe

During a brief period of weeks, we have witnessed some phenomenal changes in the world, particularly in the Eastern Bloc countries, changes which God-fearing men attribute to the hand of the Almighty in bringing about His glorious purposes to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. Walls have come down, gates have opened, and millions of voices have chorused the song of freedom! We rejoice in the dawning of a brighter day.

The news media have made the events in Eastern Europe appear as a purely political revolution even though many of the oppressed have recognized it as a "religious renaissance" and have acknowledged the influence of divine intervention (*USA Today*, 16 Mar. 1990, p. 13A).

A prominent national magazine has editorialized on the reasons for this sudden, dramatic change. It was "an idea . . . democracy—and its phenomenally successful application in America [and some other parts of the world]."

The article concludes, "America's contribution to the world will continue to be in the realm of ideas and ideals" ("An American Vision for the 1990s," *Fortune*, 26 Mar. 1990, p. 14).

The peoples in Eastern Europe have slowly but effectively been exposed to ideals of truth and basic rights through

messages by satellite, radio, printed materials, even programs and recordings by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir; word of mouth; heart-to-heart contacts; and the light of Christ encouraging seeds of truth to seep into their consciousness—a precept here and a precept there—and when the opportunity arrived, they confidently seized upon it.

The transformation of once-mighty man-made empires with such speed and determination has released new springs of faith and hope in the hearts of hundreds of millions of oppressed souls. Where there was despair, now the bright light of freedom shines forth. This only could have happened in such a miraculous way by the intervening hand of the Almighty! "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).

God's works for His people

Just after the Israelites had walked across the Jordan River from Moab into Canaan, Joshua instructed twelve men, one from each tribe, to each take a stone from the dry riverbed of the Jordan to build a memorial unto the children of Israel forever. Joshua said: "When your children ask you what these stones mean, you will tell them about the time when Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. Tell them that the Lord your God dried up the water of the Jordan for you until you had crossed, just as He dried up the Red Sea for us. Because of this, everyone on earth will know how great the Lord's power is, and you will honor the Lord your God forever" (see Joshua 4:21–24).

The Bible is replete with admonitions to remember the mighty acts of God as He has intervened in history for His people. We are witnesses of His mighty, intervening hand in the world even today.

God is our Father. He is concerned about the welfare of His children everywhere. But even a patient, loving Heavenly Father must weary of tolerating ungodliness as evidenced when "the Lord rained upon Sodom and . . . Gomorrah brimstone and fire from . . . out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24).

We need divine direction

Julia Ward Howe felt impressed to share her deep personal feelings for the need of divine direction in the struggle between the states in America. During the night, these eloquent words came into her mind and she quickly wrote them down:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the
coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where
the grapes of wrath are stored.
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of
his terrible, swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that
shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men
before his judgment seat.
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer
him; be jubilant my feet!
Our God is marching on. ["Battle
Hymn of the Republic," *Hymns*, no.
60]

God's work to restore the gospel

President Joseph F. Smith declared, "The Almighty raised up [this nation] by the power of his omnipotent hand, that it might be possible in the latter days for the kingdom of God to be established in the earth" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 409).

President Smith continued, "His hand has been over this nation, and it is his purpose and design to enlarge it, make it glorious . . . to the end that those who are kept in bondage and serfdom may be brought to the enjoyment of the fullest freedom and liberty of conscience possible for intelligent men to exercise in the earth" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 409).

The religious freedom established in America made possible the coming forth of the plain and precious truths of the Book of Mormon "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations" (preface to the

Book of Mormon). These writings are to come unto the Gentiles that they may "know the decrees of God" and repent (Ether 2:11).

Religious freedom and opportunities

It is incumbent upon the members of the Church who have had the gift of religious freedom to share this knowledge and testimony with the peoples of the world. Do not underestimate the profound influence—politically and socially—of the principles of the restored gospel upon all of mankind.

"Our mission [is] to save men," wrote Joseph F. Smith. "We have been laboring all these . . . years . . . to bring men to a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to bring them to repentance, to obedience to . . . God's law . . . to save [them] from error, . . . to turn away from evil and to learn to do good" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 72-73).

The opportunity for meaningful service to others is expanding rapidly. To some of us, it's just across the street; to others, across the ocean. The destiny of many nations is now being decided. Every generation is crucial. We may not be responsible for past generations, but we cannot escape the responsibility for this present one. It is beyond our comprehension to imagine the billions of souls who depend upon us to bring them—some way, somehow—this glorious message of the gospel. Of course all people will not respond, but all must be given the opportunity to hear and respond after being taught by the Spirit of Christ.

Being connected to inward power

Several years ago, upon entering an electrical establishment, Elder James E. Talmage saw an impressive array of lamps, door chimes, and other electrical items. And "having chosen a lamp, [he] turned the switch to test the . . . light; but lo, there was no light. The attendant told [him] that the lamps were there as an exhibit only, but were not connected up."

He reported, "I turned to the bells, but when I pressed a button I listened in vain for [a] responsive tinkle. And so with everything [else] in the shop—pleasing to look upon, some pieces artistic, all suggestive of usefulness, but, as displayed, they were [only] ornaments and nothing more, for they were not connected up."

Upon leaving the shop Elder Talmage thought, "A burning candle . . . is worth more in terms of utility than the most elaborate of electrolights without the current." Then a fitting parallel came to his mind of the "scriptural description of minds and souls darkened and deceived by outward appearances while devoid of spirituality: '*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*' (2 Timothy 3:5)" (*Handbook of the Restoration* [Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1944], pp. 389–90).

A few years ago I had an interesting view of the tallest spire in Reykjavik, Iceland, as we were landing at the airport. We were told that this tall building was a church, and after greeting our Saints and inspecting our church building which I was to dedicate, I was curious to visit this other building we had seen from the air with the tall, stately spire. It was very impressive from a distance. However, as we approached the building we discovered that the front door was made of plywood and padlocked. A sign directed us to the back door. This large church building with such an impressive front and its high steeple, we discovered, was only a shell of a building. Though under construction for forty years, the weather-beaten framework was still in place—a reminder of ambitious plans on a grand scale but lacking the faith and foresight for its completion.

Continuing with Elder Talmage, he said: "Men may . . . erect church buildings—from humble chapel[s] to stately cathedral[s]—but [they are only] elaborate externals if they are not connected up with the source of divine wisdom and authority through the [current] of the holy priesthood . . . [and the] vitalizing

power of the Holy Ghost" (*Handbook of the Restoration*, p. 390).

Later, as we met in our smaller but adequate building in Reykjavik, it was comforting to know that it was not just a shell, but had the vitalizing power and Spirit of God in that little building.

Preparing nations to accept truth

We declare in all solemnity that the Lord is now preparing the nations of the earth to receive the truth He desires them to have. But in order for a person to accept the truth, he must prepare himself by exercising faith in the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Such faith accepts the existence of God our Father, the teachings of Jesus concerning man's dealings with his fellowmen, and the teachings concerning Christ's relationship to God as His Son. Once a person has prepared himself to receive and accept truth, it is then sealed upon his heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the Testifier of Truth. It is then incumbent upon the person to conform his life to those standards of truth. This may require fundamental changes in life-style and the seeking of repentance for sins committed.

The Lord's power is at hand and evident. True believers will have unusual opportunities to be of service. I am convinced that those who labor unselfishly in behalf of others, with no thought of remuneration, will be physically and spiritually refreshed and renewed. We must prove ourselves, have the desire, and be found worthy to assist the Lord in accomplishing His purposes with men on earth.

I testify that the name of Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven whereby men may be saved and that all men, everywhere, must be brought to a knowledge of this truth if they are to receive the great, eternal exaltation provided by a gracious and loving Father.

The Lord instructed the young prophet Joseph in October of 1831:

"The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll

forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

I testify we are witnessing the fulfillment of this promise, and that this work, given by Almighty God to His Son to proclaim, to teach, and finally to judge, will be done with eternal love, in

the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy will now address us.

Elder Hans B. Ringger

What shall we do?

After the resurrection of Christ, the Twelve Apostles preached the gospel in the city of Jerusalem. Their message touched the hearts of many people, and, upon testifying of the truthfulness of the Resurrection, they were asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Ever since, this very question has been asked by people all over the world, by people like you and me. Daily we are confronted with decisions concerning the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of those around us. Our decisions are based upon our understanding of what is good and right for us, and we try to avoid pitfalls and mistakes. We hope for happiness, and we wish for comfort.

In my own life, this hope and wish for a happier and more meaningful life causes me to evaluate my daily decisions more carefully. And never do I feel the need for some guiding principle more than when I come to a crossroad, for without some direction I feel incapable of pursuing my course consistently.

Act by the gospel of Jesus Christ

But it is one thing to know the way and another to take it. Some of us probably struggle to find guiding principles, some sort of foundation on which to build, and others have designed the perfect plan but never find the motivation, time, or courage to use it. In one way or another, we are paralyzed by the lack of understanding that true happiness comes

from realizing our plans, beliefs, and hopes.

I believe that the foundation and guiding light for all our decisions is the gospel of Jesus Christ and His message to the world. The teachings of Christ must be embedded in our desire to choose the right and in our wish to find happiness. His righteous life must be reflected in our own actions. The Lord not only teaches love, He *is* love. He not only preached the importance of faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, He *lived* accordingly. His life reflected the gospel that He preached. There was and is total harmony between His thoughts and His actions.

I believe that if we want to be true Christians, our lives must be founded on true principles and our actions must reflect that. But I do not believe that we can pick and choose which principles are the most convenient ones. Today, however, I would like to mention those that are true to my heart and that have helped me in my quest to take the Christian course.

Love is the essence of our lives

When a man asked Christ what he should do to inherit eternal life, He answered, "Love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Love is the essence of the gospel and the guiding light for a Christlike life. It not only teaches us to look upward but also to look around us. Our heart, might, and mind must be dedicated to the Lord and to our fellow men, women, and children.

But what does that really mean? It means that we follow the admonition of the scripture, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It means that we live the example of the good Samaritan, who was free of prejudice and excuses and therefore truly loved his neighbor. He went the second mile and gave of what he had despite all the odds. His life was one of single-minded service.

By contrast, the Apostle James observed that "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). An old Swiss saying describes such indecision in the following words:

With one foot in,
With one foot out,
You can't be in,
You can't be out—
Not warm, not cold,
Not square, not round,
More poor than poor
And always poor.
For such a man
Will never know
Where to begin
Or where to go.

No compromise in dedication

The Christian course knows no compromise.

We are promised by the Lord if we choose His way, we will be blessed beyond our comprehension and in ways that are not measurable.

A Christian life demands decision and dedication. It is a dedication that is free of fanaticism but full of understanding and love. It is a dedication that knows no selfishness but yet knows of our personal needs. It is a dedication that embraces all mankind and yet keeps an eye single to the Lord. And it is a dedication that brings joy but is seldom free of hardship, disappointment, and discomfort.

It is not always easy to make the right decision, and some of us struggle a life long to find the right course. Remember, it is not for us to judge those who might be confused or who have not

the strength to change. What they need is our understanding and support.

We should give of our wealth

When Jesus came to the coast of Judea, a young man said to him, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (Matthew 19:20). The answer Christ gave was simple but powerful: "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (19:21).

Christ speaks to all of us, not only to the young rich man who went away sorrowful. He commands us to give of our wealth, whatever it might be. For some it is material possessions, for others time or a talent. For those of us who have worldly riches, it does not mean that we cannot enjoy the commodities of life for which we work. But it means that we use them to do good and that we share them with those in need. Our hearts should be set upon helping those in need.

But money alone does not lift the burdens of our fellowmen, and many of us live in a time and place where there is little to spare. The world is in need of time, and if we have but one hour to spare, we are wealthy. It takes time to listen and to comfort, it takes time to teach and to encourage, and it takes time to feed and to clothe. We all have the gift to lift each other's burdens and to make a difference in somebody's life.

Let us decide to serve now

The needy are all around us. Too often, however, we are blind to those needs or fear those people whose company makes us feel uncomfortable. Yes, we admire people and organizations for the numerous services they render; and yes, we rejoice in the tremendous social changes many countries experienced during the last few months. But our admiration and interest are not enough. People at home and abroad need our help. Let us decide to serve now, even if that means leaving the comfort of our homes temporarily.

Most of the time we do not even have to go too far; within our own communities there are people of all ages who are homeless, terminally ill, or lonely. We cannot hope for a better world, for more perfect governments and societies, if we are not willing to do our share.

We need to look around us, and if we cannot see poverty, illness, and despair in our own neighborhood or ward, then we have to look harder. And remember, we cannot be afraid to go beyond our own social and cultural circles. We have to rid ourselves of religious, racial, or social prejudices and expand the boundaries of our service. Service should never discriminate and is hardly ever easy. Did not Jesus Himself mingle with those who were branded unfit by the self-righteous Pharisees? And were not those people the ones who needed Him the most?

I understand that the needs of this world can overwhelm us and that the injustices of life and the ills of society can paralyze us. But I believe that no good cause is in vain, and if we can only touch one life, the world is a better place. Choose your service today, and choose it wisely. Prepare yourself to be of help to others. There are many good causes inside and outside the Church. There is a need for volunteers who share their time and talents with those who are less fortunate.

We should love and care for others

To love and care for others is a decision. It is the answer to the Lord's

exhortation, "Come, follow me." It is the answer the Apostles gave to those who asked, "What shall we do?" To say "I cannot" is a decision for *no*. It is a decision that will rob us of the very happiness we are seeking. And most of all, it is a decision against a Christlike life.

I testify to you that we can only be in the service of our God if we are in the service of our fellowmen (see Mosiah 2:17). I hope that we all have the wisdom and determination to decide today whom we want to serve. And I pray that we will decide together with the prophet Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy. Brother Ringger is a citizen of Switzerland and presently serves as President of the Europe Area of the Church. You may be interested to know that among those newly sustained this afternoon are citizens of Chile, England, and Brazil, as well as of the United States.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Called to Serve."

Elders Spencer J. Condie and F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy will speak to us following the singing.

The choir and congregation sang "Called to Serve."

Elder Spencer J. Condie

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the new members of the Church who "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Visions from the mountaintops

Inasmuch as many of you newly baptized members will soon be called to

serve as leaders at different times in various Church callings, I would like to share some short scriptural lessons on leadership.

In the Pearl of Great Price we learn that as Moses was called to become a prophet of God, he was taken to a mountaintop, where he beheld a panoramic view of all of God's wondrous creations.

Jehovah gave him a vision of his immediate goal, which was to "deliver my people from bondage" (Moses 1:26). The Lord then explained his long-term goal: "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (1:39).

From the Book of Mormon we read of the young prophet Nephi who also beheld a vision on a mountain (see 1 Nephi 11:1). Once he had envisioned the promised land, he could not be dissuaded from building a ship that would take him there (see 1 Nephi 17–18). Once parents have a vision of a son dressed in a missionary suit or of a daughter in the temple dressed in white, then family home evening, family prayer, and scripture study assume their proper place in every home. From Moses and Nephi we learn that *a leader must have a vision of the work which lies ahead.*

Lessons from the kings of Israel

Following the Great Exodus from Egypt to the land of promise, the children of Israel were governed by judges for a period of more than three centuries (1429 to 1095 B.C.). These judges were then succeeded by a series of kings, the first of whom was Saul, anointed by the prophet Samuel (see 1 Samuel 8–10). For decades Saul enjoyed the adulation and support of the people. But then, lifted up in the pride of his heart, he disregarded the counsel of the Lord's prophet. At that point Samuel reminded him of the time when he was little in his own sight (see 1 Samuel 15:17) and taught him that immortal lesson: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (15:22). From Saul's life we learn that *a leader must be humble and obedient.*

Saul was succeeded by King David, whose forty-year reign is considered by many to be the golden age of Israelite history. Indeed, Jerusalem became known as the City of David. But notwithstanding his great leadership abilities, he was tempted to commit a very grievous

sin, which he then compounded with an even greater sin. From King David's life we learn that even kings must be careful. *Leadership positions do not totally protect us from temptation.*

Following the death of David, his son Solomon ascended to the throne. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon prayed in deep humility: "O Lord my God, . . . I am but a little child. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people." And God *did* give him "a wise and an understanding heart" (1 Kings 3:7, 9, 12).

Armed with the Spirit of the Lord, Solomon became God's instrument in building the holy temple for which Israel had hoped and prayed for many generations. But with the passage of time Solomon took him wives outside of Israel "and his wives turned away his heart" and he "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings 11:3, 6). From Solomon we can learn that *knowledge and wisdom alone do not qualify people to lead.* Perhaps Jacob said it best: "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29).

After Solomon's forty-year reign, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made the king. He sought the counsel of the elders regarding how he should rule. "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve *them*, and answer *them*, and speak good words to *them*, then *they* will be *thy* servants for ever" (1 Kings 12:7; italics added). The Savior gave his disciples similar counsel when he taught them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Within the kingdom of God, *to lead is to serve.*

But Rehoboam rejected the counsel which required him to humble himself and to serve others. Instead, he chose to reign over Israel with a very heavy hand, thus causing the great division into the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah (see 1 Kings 12:20).

Hezekiah led Israel righteously

For the next 220 years the people generally set aside their sacred covenants, thus wandering in the ways of the world. Then a young man named Hezekiah began to reign in Judah. "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," and "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel" (2 Kings 18:3, 5).

Hezekiah gathered together the priesthood bearers of the day and said, "Hear me ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place" (2 Chronicles 29:5). "Be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God . . . but yield yourselves unto the Lord, . . . and serve the Lord your God" (30:7-8).

In response to this assertive leader, who was supported by the prophet Isaiah, "the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people" (30:20), and "in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness" (31:18).

From King Hezekiah, as from King Benjamin (see Mosiah 2-5), we can learn a very positive lesson on leadership: circumstances do not always need to remain the same. Leaders *can* make a difference! *Faith in the Lord and high expectations can bring about a mighty change of heart* among an entire people.

The leadership of the prophets

One of the great teachers and prophet-leaders in Israel was Ezra, who "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). As Saints of the latter days, we are grateful for a modern-day Ezra, even our beloved prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, who, like Ezra of old, has prepared himself to receive the word of the Lord and is prepared to do the Lord's will. I bear you my witness that there is a living prophet in Israel today.

Another great leader who continually sought the will of the Lord was the Prophet Joseph Smith. His very life exemplified Paul's admonition to live the gospel that we preach (see 1 Corinthians 9:14). A great strength of the Prophet was his ability to delegate and develop leadership skills in those around him. The expedition of Zion's Camp is but one example of Joseph's leadership based upon the principle "Come, follow me" (see Luke 18:22). At the conclusion of Zion's Camp, the Prophet gave the newly organized high council detailed instructions regarding their callings and then told them, "If I should now be taken away, I [have] accomplished the great work the Lord [has] laid before me" (*History of the Church*, 2:124). Long before his martyrdom the Prophet Joseph was diligently training those who would continue to lead the kingdom after he was gone. Here is another important lesson of leadership: *Leaders are duty-bound and obligated to prepare others to take their place* at some future time. Brothers and sisters, the cemeteries are filled with leaders who thought they were indispensable.

Among the most righteous and effective leaders to ever walk the earth was Enoch, who persistently sought to save every single soul.

"And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness. . .

"And lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven" (Moses 7:18, 21).

Note the reference to the "process of time." A great leader must have high expectations, tempered with patience. In section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that Enoch was "four hundred and thirty years old when he was translated" (v. 49). Brothers and sisters, I rest my case: *perfection takes a long, long time*. But still, we are commanded to become perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect (see Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48).

The leadership example of Christ

From the most exemplary life of all, even that of the Savior Jesus Christ, we learn perhaps the most important lesson of all. As the Savior was in the depths of suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed that the bitter cup might pass from him, adding in meekness and lowliness of heart, "Nevertheless not *my* will, but *thine*, be done" (Luke 22:42; italics added). *A leader in the Lord's kingdom must be meek and lowly of heart* (see Alma 37:34).

May each of us engaged in the work of the Lord perform *His* work in *His* way, "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, . . .

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love" (D&C 121:41-43).

I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder F. Melvin Hammond

My beloved brothers and sisters, today I am happy to express to you the genuine love of the members of the Church in the South America North Area and of your wonderful missionary sons and daughters, young and old, who constantly say to me, "Elder Hammond, when you see our dear prophet, please tell him that we love him. And when you speak in a general conference of the Church, please tell the Saints that our love of the Savior is united firmly with theirs." They are all so wonderful, and I am pleased to comply with their loving request.

The understanding of young people

On this occasion I would like to speak especially to the young people the world over. Somehow, I believe that they have a special ability to understand important things. May I illustrate with this little story?

Many years ago we sat as a family in our weekly home evening discussing the principle of the Resurrection. Attempting to explain in simple terms what is involved, I noticed our small children looking at me with puzzled expressions on their tiny faces. Apologetically, I mumbled something about it being very difficult to understand such things. Whereupon, Lezlee, our then five-year-old, with a look of loving concern for my

discomfort, said, "Don't feel badly, Daddy; I understand you." And then she proceeded to demonstrate her new gospel knowledge. Lying down on the floor, straight and stiff, with her arms outstretched, she slowly raised herself and said, "It's simple; you just sink up."

So I want to talk to you about the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, because on Easter Sunday we will celebrate His rising from the dead and all of us *should* know the wonderful story of that remarkable event.

The first Easter morning

It was early on Sunday morning. Deep darkness still hung over the holy city, Jerusalem. Mary of Magdala entered the garden and approached the tomb where the body of Jesus of Nazareth recently had been laid.

Just two days before, the humble Christ, hanging from a wooden cross, had given up the ghost, and mortality had ended for the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh.

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin but a loving disciple of Jesus, had gone to the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, and had asked that he be allowed to remove the body from the cross. Permission was granted. The body was taken from the cross, and Joseph, with the assistance of Nicodemus, who

earlier had come to question Jesus by night, gently prepared the body for burial after the manner of the Jews. The kind, loving men placed the body of the deceased in a newly hewn tomb belonging to Joseph. Then a great stone was rolled across the entrance, and a Roman seal was placed upon it, "lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead" (Matthew 27:64).

Now Mary Magdalene approached the tomb, but to her utter amazement the huge stone had been rolled away. The body of her beloved Jesus was gone. Quickly she ran to advise the Apostles of this new tragedy, saying, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2).

Peter, the chief Apostle, and John, the beloved Apostle, hurried to the place of burial. The account of Mary was confirmed. The tomb was indeed empty, except for the linens which had been used to wrap the body. Saddened, the two Apostles went away to their own homes.

"But Mary," who had followed Peter and John back to the garden, "stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre" (20:11). Two angels dressed in white sat within the tomb. Seeing her great grief they asked, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Sorrowfully, she answered them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him" (20:13).

Still weeping, Mary turned from the tomb, and through her misty eyes she noticed someone standing close by. The person spoke to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Thinking that perhaps it was the gardener who addressed her, she replied, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away" (20:15).

In a voice tintured with pure love and the sweetest tenderness, he simply uttered one word, "Mary." There was no mistaking the voice; it was Jesus Christ. And thrilled beyond any comprehension,

the dear woman could only say, "Rabboni," which means Master (see John 20:16).

There He stood—alive! Raised from the dead! Never to die again! His perfect body forever united with the spirit. The eternal Christ!

To the credit of gentle, loving women everywhere, our Redeemer chose as the first mortal witness of His resurrection from the dead a woman, Mary Magdalene.

Concentrate on life, not death

As we contemplate the events leading to the death of Jesus Christ, we tend to grieve for the awful sufferings which He experienced at the hands of wicked men—the terrible rending by the lash, the dreadful nails placed in His hands and feet, the prolonged agony of the cross, and finally His tender heart breaking for the sins of all men.

But stop! He is not dead! He is risen! He is the first fruit of the resurrection. Without Him, life for all men would end at death. All would be consigned to the grave, their bodies to molder in the dust forever. But because of Him, our Savior, even Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, we, everyone of us, will live again—freed from the everlasting chains of death.

To you sweet parents who have placed the mortal body of a dear son or a beautiful daughter in the grave, or to all who have lost a mother or father, husband or wife, to the relentless hand of death, I say, have hope. For if we ourselves are faithful to the end, they will not be lost to us save for a moment. And then, oh, the sweetness of that joyous reunion, for the tender mercy of the Lord will bring them forth triumphant from the grave.

And so, my wonderful young people everywhere, as we come to celebrate Easter, will you remember the story of Jesus coming out of the grave a perfect, glorified being? Will you remember that He made it possible for all of us to someday be resurrected and to come back and

live with Him in the celestial kingdom of God throughout all eternity? Then if you will remember, you will understand His love for all of us, and your love for Him will grow deeper and deeper forever.

Such is my humble testimony of the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which I proclaim to you along with my profound love for Him and each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elders Spencer J. Condie and F. Melvin Hammond, who have addressed us.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker, and he will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, also of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

In a revelation the Lord said, "Blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith; for I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right" (D&C 124:15). I personally know of no higher praise that any man could receive.

A definition of integrity

I have felt impressed to speak today about the need for integrity: old-fashioned, personal, practical integrity. To me, integrity means always doing what is right and good, regardless of the immediate consequences. It means being righteous from the very depth of our soul, not only in our actions but, more important, in our thoughts and in our hearts. Personal integrity implies such trustworthiness and incorruptibility that we are incapable of being false to a trust or covenant.

We all have within us the ability to know what is right and good. Speaking to the "peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3), the prophet Mormon said:

"It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night.

"For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by

the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

"But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him" (Moroni 7:15-17).

How much do we value our integrity?

Having received the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil, we should always choose the good. We need not be misled, even though fraud, deception, deceit, and duplicity often seem to be acceptable in our world. Lying, stealing, and cheating are commonplace. Integrity, a firm adherence to the highest moral and ethical standards, is essential to the life of a true Latter-day Saint.

Like Job of old, we need to say, "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me" (Job 27:5). Though he had lost almost everything he valued—his family, his friends, his health, his wealth—he refused to give up his integrity. In sharp contrast, many today trade away their integrity for a very small price tag. A person who shoplifts for a candy bar, makeup, or jewelry trades priceless integrity for a meager gain. A person who falsifies a tax return by not reporting

income or claiming invalid deductions compromises valued integrity for a pittance of unpaid income tax. One who avoids paying bills promptly for goods or services received exchanges cherished integrity for a perceived temporary advantage. Husbands or wives who are unfaithful to their spouses trade their prized integrity for a fleeting moment of mirth. Integrity is so precious that it is beyond price; it is invaluable.

The value of Joseph's integrity

Joseph, the son of Jacob, was a model of integrity. No doubt many of you have been reminded of him recently in a Sunday School class. Joseph's integrity placed him among the greatest of our Heavenly Father's sons. He did what was right and good; he was trustworthy and incorruptible, self-disciplined never to violate a trust.

Because of his integrity and righteousness, Joseph was favored and blessed of the Lord in every circumstance. His life is evidence that "all things work together for good to [those who] love God" (Romans 8:28). His example is especially pertinent to us because most members of the Church have descended from his loins.

His father, Jacob, loved Joseph even from his youth. The Lord revealed future events to Joseph in dreams. However, his brothers hated him, plotted to take his life, and then sold him as a slave. When he was carried captive to Egypt, the Lord was with him there. Joseph became overseer of the house of Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. When approached by Potiphar's wife, Joseph refused and fled from her improper advances because of his personal righteousness and because he would not violate Potiphar's trust.

This refusal and the accusations it prompted caused Joseph to be imprisoned. Again the Lord was with him. Joseph became overseer of the prison. The Lord enabled him to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker and, later, Pharaoh's dreams of seven fat and lean cows and of seven full and thin

ears of corn. Subsequently, Joseph became ruler over all Egypt, second in rank only to Pharaoh. He directed the storage of food during the years of plenty and the dispensing of it during the years of famine.

During the famine, Joseph's brothers, who had sold him as a slave twenty-two years earlier, came to Egypt to obtain food. Not recognizing him, they bowed down to him because of his high office.

In a tender, touching scene, Joseph identified himself to his brothers and forgave them. I suppose he could have retaliated for their mistreatment of him by making them slaves, having them imprisoned, or even having them put to death. But he did what was right and good. He said:

"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. . . .

"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity . . . and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God" (Genesis 45:4-5, 7-8).

Through Joseph, the Lord preserved the children of Israel and provided a place in Egypt for them to flourish and increase.

This story is well known, but I urge you to read it again, focusing your attention on the integrity of Joseph and on the blessings it brought to him. He became the birthright son in the house of Israel and received an inheritance in the lands of the Americas (see Ether 13:8). The Lord permitted him to prophesy of Moses, who would deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt (see JST, Genesis 50:27-29), and of Joseph Smith, the prophet of the restoration of the gospel in the latter days (see JST, Genesis 50:30-33; 2 Nephi 3:6-21).

The integrity of great leaders

A more modern life of integrity is exemplified by George Washington, first

president of the United States of America. His integrity and character, more than the brilliance of his intellect, made him the choice of his countrymen as their leader. He loved the peace and tranquility of his Mount Vernon estate but responded when duty called him into the turmoil of public life. He refused any compensation, expecting the government to pay only his expenses, of which he kept an exact account. He gave forty-five years of his life in the service of his country (see David O. McKay, *Secrets of a Happy Life* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], pp. 142-44). As I visited the Mount Vernon stake two weeks ago, I felt the spirit of George Washington, the father of his country. The noble deeds of this great man passed through my mind.

The Prophet Joseph Smith is another great example of integrity. He did not waver from doing as the Lord directed, even at the peril of his life. He "did not shirk life, nor did he try to avoid its experiences. . . . He marched, built, sawed, hewed, plowed, planted with everyone else. His muscular body was a result of physical exertion. His mind was 'an IDEAL' of unrelenting seeking" (Leon R. Hartshorn, *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], p. 67). "His greatness did not lie alone in prophesying, . . . speaking, or writing, but in what he was" (Hartshorn, p. 38).

President Ezra Taft Benson, our prophet, seer, and revelator, is an example of sublime integrity. His assignment to Europe by the First Presidency to relieve the sufferings of our Saints after World War II exemplified the nobility of his character.

"A man's true greatness is not in what he says he is, nor in what people say he is; his greatness lies in what he really is" (Hartshorn, p. 38). Our integrity determines what we really are.

Those with integrity are saved

The Lord expects us to live lives of integrity and to be obedient to his commandments. He said, "And why call ye

me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). On another occasion, he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

A little lying, a little cheating, or taking a little unfair advantage is not acceptable to the Lord (see 2 Nephi 28:8-9). The scriptures warn that these are Satan's ways to lead us "carefully down to [destruction]" (28:21).

To Saints of the Restoration, the Savior said, "For of him unto whom much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3). Church members have been given much, indeed: the gospel of Jesus Christ. That blessing carries a risk. We have been warned, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Deal righteously with neighbors

The world desperately needs men and women of integrity. Nearly every day we hear of fraud, misapplication of funds, false advertising, or other dealings designed to obtain gain by cheating or deception. The Lord abhors such practices. A proverb states, "A false balance [that is, a deceptive scale] is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight" (Proverbs 11:1). The Lord commanded, "If thou borrowest . . . thou shalt restore that which thou hast borrowed" (D&C 136:25). He commanded the ancient Israelites:

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. . . .

"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him. . . .

"Ye shall do no [injustice] in judgment, . . . in weight, or in measure.

"Just balances, just weights . . . shall ye have" (Leviticus 19:11, 13, 35-36).

Integrity overcomes selfishness

The Lord commanded the Israelites to be more than honest. If they came

upon a lost ox, they were to search out the owner so they could return the animal. Today, our intentions and dealings must be similarly pure and sound before the Lord. We must be fair with suppliers, customers, and employees; repay obligations and keep agreements; and never deceive by failing to disclose all the facts about an investment or business venture. If our selfish hearts "are set so much upon the things of this world" (D&C 121:35), we can easily lose our integrity. We must remember that "we believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men" (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell stated, "Oh, how we wish for more honesty and less corruption, more goodness instead of so much cleverness, and more wisdom in lieu of unanchored brilliance."

We must be honest with the Lord as we pay our tithes. Faithful Saints have learned that he will "open . . . the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). The payment of tithing has less to do with money, but more to do with faith. Let us return one-tenth of our income to the Lord (see D&C 119:4) and never be guilty of robbing him by failing to pay our tithes. Then, we also should remember those in need and contribute generous fast-offerings for their assistance.

Service is an act of integrity

We show our integrity by caring for and serving others. Let me cite an instance where family members, a Christ-like bishop, home teachers, visiting teachers, and ward members so lived.

A young mother of eight children was left without a husband. The oldest child was twelve, the youngest barely one, and one daughter was confined to a wheelchair. This mother moved to a ward that was close to her family and friends. Being single and divorced, she feared that she might be ignored or shunned. However, as she was moving in, ward members streamed in to welcome her, bring food, and offer assis-

tance. She hardly had time to direct those who were unloading the moving van.

After getting settled, she and her family received innumerable expressions of service and love. Her home teachers repaired her appliances and other household items. Her visiting teachers kept very close and made sure she never had to go alone to a Church activity. At Christmastime, she found money left anonymously on her porch or had it given to her in a handshake. She received hundreds of dollars toward the purchase of a wheelchair lift for her van. After being out of town briefly, she returned home and found that ward members had renovated her kitchen.

Her parents, brother, and sisters provided financial and emotional support. They helped take care of her children, accompanied her to the emergency room with a daughter who was very ill, built a ramp to the front door for the wheelchair, built shelves for food storage, and helped with yard work.

All of this kindness lifted her spirits and gave her courage to meet the trials and hardships of each day. Those who looked after this young mother practiced "pure religion" (James 1:27) because of their integrity. Let us "go, and do . . . likewise" (Luke 10:37), as the Savior taught in the parable of the good Samaritan.

The rewards of integrity

The rewards of integrity are immeasurable. One is the indescribable inner peace and serenity that come from knowing we are doing what is right; another is an absence of the guilt and anxiety that accompany sin.

Another reward of integrity is the confidence it can give us in approaching God. When virtue garnishes our thoughts unceasingly, our confidence is strong in the presence of God (see D&C 121:45). When we are doing what is right, we will not feel timid and hesitant about seeking divine direction. We will know the Lord will answer our prayers and help us in our need.

The consummate reward of integrity is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 121:46). The Holy Ghost does not attend us when we do evil. But when we do what is right, he can dwell with us and guide us in all we do.

My brothers and sisters, let us live true to the trust the Lord has placed in us. Let us strive for personal, practical integrity in every endeavor, regardless of how mundane or inconsequential it may seem. The small matters accumulate to shape the direction of our lives.

I bear my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and is our Lord

and Savior. This is his church. Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God, as is President Ezra Taft Benson. I bear this testimony humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, also of the Council of the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

May I add my personal welcome to those brethren and sisters newly sustained today. What has happened today would not have occurred had you not married so well spiritually so many years ago.

We must endure our mortal tests

On one of those rare occasions when His very voice was heard, the Father testified, "Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (2 Nephi 31:15). Of all that the Father might have said, He stressed endurance. Why?

First, because God has repeatedly said He would structure mortality to be a proving and testing experience (see Abraham 3:25; Mosiah 23:21). Brothers and sisters, he has certainly kept His promise. He has carried out His divine intent, hasn't He? Thus, even our fiery trials, said Peter, should not be thought of as "some strange thing" (1 Peter 4:12). Hence, enduring is vital, and those who so last will be first spiritually!

By taking Jesus' yoke upon us and enduring, we learn most deeply of Him and especially how to be like Him (see Matthew 11:29). Even though our experiences are micro compared to His, the process is the same.

There are so many things to be endured: illness, injustice, insensitivity, poverty, aloneness, unresponsiveness,

being misrepresented and misunderstood, and, sometimes, even enemies. Paul reminds us that meek and lowly Jesus, though the Lord of the universe, "endured . . . contradiction of sinners against himself" (Hebrews 12:3). Smaller variations of these contradictions or hostilities will be felt by His disciples.

God is long-suffering with us

We tend to think only in terms of our endurance, but it is God's patient long-suffering which provides us with our chances to improve, affording us urgently needed developmental space or time (see Alma 42:4-5).

Paul observed, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11). Such "peaceable fruit" comes only in the appointed season thereof, after the blossoms and the buds.

Otherwise, if certain mortal experiences were cut short, it would be like pulling up a flower to see how the roots are doing. Put another way, too many anxious openings of the oven door, and the cake falls instead of rising. Moreover, enforced change usually does not last, while productive enduring can ingrain permanent change (see Alma 32:13-16).

As we endure, we act for ourselves

Patient endurance is to be distinguished from merely being “acted upon.” Endurance is more than pacing up and down within the cell of our circumstance; it is not only to accept the things allotted to us, it is to “act for ourselves” by magnifying what is allotted to us (see Alma 29:3, 6).

If, for instance, we are always taking our temperature to see if we are happy, we will not be. If we are constantly comparing to see if things are fair, we are not only being unrealistic, we are being unfair to ourselves.

Therefore, true enduring represents not merely the passage of time, but the passage of the soul—and not merely from A to B, but sometimes all the way from A to Z. To endure in faith and do God’s will (see D&C 63:20; 101:35) therefore involves much more than putting up with a circumstance.

Endurance requires many things

Rather than shoulder-shrugging, true enduring is soul-trembling. Jesus bled not at a few but “at every pore” (D&C 19:18).

Sometimes spiritual obedience requires us to “hold on” lovingly, such as to a rebellious child, while others cry, “Let go!” Enduring may likewise mean, however, “letting go,” when everything within us wants to “hold on,” such as to a loved one “appointed unto death” (D&C 42:48).

Patient endurance permits us to cling to our faith in the Lord and our faith in His timing when we are being tossed about by the surf of circumstance. Even when a seeming undertow grasps us, somehow, in the tumbling, we are being carried forward, though battered and bruised.

Enduring temptation is one of the greatest challenges. Jesus endured temptation and yielded not (see Mosiah 15:5). Christ withstood because He “gave no heed” to temptations (D&C 20:22). You and I tend to dally over and dabble in

temptations, entertaining them for a while, even if we later evict them. However, to give temptations any heed can set the stage for later succumbing.

Our love for others who endure

The customized challenges are often the toughest and the most ironical. For instance, King Mosiah was venerated of his people, yet, ironically, his sons became damaging enemies of the Church for a season. Nevertheless, his discerning people still esteemed Mosiah.

Will we have that same perceptive tolerance for those being wrenched by a cruel irony? When, for the moment, we ourselves are not being stretched on a particular cross, we ought to be at the foot of someone else’s—full of empathy and proffering spiritual refreshment. On the straight, narrow path, which leads to our little Calvaries, one does not hear a serious traveler exclaiming, “Look, no hands!” (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

With enduring comes a willingness, therefore, to “press forward” even when we are bone weary and would much rather pull off to the side of the road (see 2 Nephi 31:20). Hence, one prophet was especially commended by the Lord for his unwearyingness (see Helaman 10:4; see also 15:6).

Patience shows submission to God

Paul wrote of how, even after faithful disciples had “done the will of God,” they “[had] need of patience” (Hebrews 10:36). How many times have good individuals done the right thing initially only to break under subsequent stress? Sustaining correct conduct for a difficult moment under extraordinary stress is very commendable, but so is coping with sustained stress subtly present in seeming routineness. Either way, however, we are to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1), and it is a marathon, not a dash.

When you and I are unduly impatient, we are suggesting that we like our timetable better than God’s. And thus,

while the scriptural phrase "in process of time" means "eventually," it also denotes an entire spiritual process:

"The Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven" (Moses 7:21; see also D&C 38:13; Genesis 4:3; 38:12; Exodus 2:23; Judges 11:4; 2 Chronicles 21:19).

Experience brings spirituality

By itself, of course, the passage of time does not bring an automatic advance. Yet, like the prodigal son, we often need the "process of time" in order to come to our spiritual senses (Luke 15:17). The touching reunion of Jacob and Esau in the desert, so many years after their sibling rivalry, is a classic example. Generosity can replace animosity. Reflection can bring perception. But reflection and introspection require time. So many spiritual outcomes require saving truths to be mixed with time, forming the elixir of experience, that sovereign remedy for so many things.

We find that experience can produce a high spiritual yield (see D&C 122:7). Laban, for instance, was reluctant for Jacob to leave his employ, "for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake" (Genesis 30:27). The modern Church even today is instructed to "wait for a little season" to build up central Zion. Why? So that we "may be prepared . . . and have experience" (D&C 105:9-10). We gain knowledge through particular experiences, but only incrementally, "in that thing" (Alma 32:34). Hence the ongoingness of it all, and perhaps we can be forgiven for wondering, "Is there no other way?" Personal, spiritual symmetry emerges only from the shaping of prolonged obedience. Twigs are bent, not snapped, into shape.

The benefits of endurance

Without patient and meek endurance we will learn less, see less, feel less, and

hear less. We who are egocentric and impatient shut down so much of our receiving capacity.

In any case, brothers and sisters, how could there be refining fires without enduring some heat? Or greater patience without enduring some instructive waiting? Or more empathy without bearing one another's burdens—not only that others' burdens may be lightened, but that we may be enlightened through greater empathy? How can there be later magnification without enduring some present deprivation?

The enlarging of the soul requires not only some remodeling, but some excavating. Hypocrisy, guile, and other imbedded traits do not go gladly or easily, but if we "endure it well" (D&C 121:8), we will not grow testy while being tested.

Moreover, we find that sorrow can actually enlarge the mind and heart in order to "give place," expanded space for later joy.

Develop qualities through endurance

Thus, enduring is one of the cardinal attributes; it simply cannot be developed without the laboratory time in this second estate. Even the best lectures about the theory of enduring are not enough. All the other cardinal virtues—love, patience, humility, mercy, purity, submissiveness, justice—require endurance for their full development.

Puzzlement, for instance, is often the knob on the door of insight. The knob must be firmly grasped and deliberately turned with faith. The harrowing of the soul can be like the harrowing of the soil to increase the yield with things being turned upside down. Moses experienced such topsy-turvy change. A lesser individual couldn't have forsaken Egypt's treasures and privileged status only to be hunted and later resented as a prophetic presence in the royal courts which he had doubtless known earlier, but as an insider. Yet we are told Moses endured by faith (see Hebrews 11:24-29).

George Macdonald has said that God is easily pleased but hard to satisfy. As a Father, God is delighted with our first and further steps, but He knows how straight, how narrow, and how long the ensuing path is. Again, how vital endurance!

The blessings of eternal life

Happily, while the Lord has promised us a tutoring mortality, He has also promised us glorious things as well!

"And all they who . . . endure in faith . . . shall . . . partake of all this glory" (D&C 101:35).

Eternal life brings to us, brothers and sisters, the full bestowal of all the specific promises made in connection with all the temple's holy ordinances. John declared that the "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14) shall "inherit all things" (21:7). Modern scriptures confirm that these special souls will eventually receive "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). "All"! You and I cannot even imagine such bounteous blessings.

Meanwhile, with spiritual endurance there can be felicity amid poverty, gratitude without plentitude. There can even be meekness amid injustice. One never sees the "root of bitterness springing up" in the enduring meek (Hebrews 12:15).

While in the midst of all these things, if we are wise like Job, we will avoid charging God foolishly (see Job 1:22).

Jesus shows us the way

As with every virtue, Jesus is the Exemplar. While shouldering Jesus' yoke, we, too, can better come to "know according to the flesh how to succor [each other]" (Alma 7:12).

Likewise, by seeing life's experiences through to the end, on our small scale, we can finally say, as Jesus did on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). We, too, can then have "finished [our] preparations," having done the particular work God has given each of us to do

(D&C 19:19; see also John 17:4). However, our tiny cup cannot be taken from us either. For this reason have we come unto the world (see John 12:26-27).

In a small but nevertheless sufficient way, we will experience what it is to suffer "both body and spirit" (see D&C 19:18). Some afflictions are physical, others mental, or so begin. Often, however, they are interactive, forming a special pain.

Therefore, one of the most powerful and searching questions ever asked of all of us in our sufferings hangs in time and space before us: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8). Jesus plumbed the depths and scaled the heights in order to comprehend all things (see D&C 88:6). Jesus, therefore, is not only a fully atoning but also a fully comprehending Savior!

Endurance brings peace

Jesus' few dozen words describing the agonies of the Atonement reveal that He was determined that He "not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18) or pull back. Instead, submissive Christ reminded us that He both "partook" and "finished" (see D&C 19:19). Each act was so essential! No wonder Paul called Jesus the "finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

After describing the agonies of the Atonement, Jesus urged us to "walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23). This is the only way, brothers and sisters, that you and I can avoid shrinking while achieving that peace which "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

You and I see in those who "endure it well" a quiet, peaceful majesty, an unspoken, inner awareness that, like Paul, they have "kept the faith." And they know it, though they do not speak of it.

Now, as this lovely Primary chorus will sing, our task is "trying to be like Jesus" and remembering the "lessons he taught" ("I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook* [1989], p. 78).

For the eloquence and for the exquisiteness and the elegance of Christ's everlasting example of enduring, I express again my public gratitude, my undying gratitude to the Father for the gift of His Son, and I so express it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain standard time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which immediately follows must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We bring to the attention of all of you the fact that at 2:00 A.M. in the morning (tomorrow morning, that is), we change to daylight saving time. You should move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire so you will be here at the right time tomorrow.

We express gratitude to this Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region. They have given us beautiful music which we so much have appreciated. They will sing in closing "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder George R. Hill III of the Seventy, and this session will be adjourned.

The choir sang "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

Elder George R. Hill III offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 160th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, March 31, 1990. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Ephraim, Orem, Salt Lake, Salt Lake Community College, Ogden, and Logan institutes under the direction of Brother Douglas Brenchley, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love

and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries throughout the world. We note that Elders M. Russell Ballard, Hugh W. Pinnock, and Ted E. Brewerton are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders John H. Groberg and Yoshihiko Kikuchi are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon the following brethren were called as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Eduardo Ayala, LeGrand R. Curtis, Clinton L. Cutler, Robert K. Dellenbach, Harold G. Hillam, Kenneth Johnson, Helvécio Martins, Lynn A. Mickelsen, J Ballard Washburn, and Durrell A. Woolsey.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir

from the Ephraim, Orem, Salt Lake, Salt Lake Community College, Ogden, and Logan institutes under the direction of Brother Douglas Brenchley, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Be Still, My Soul," and following the singing, Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Be Still, My Soul."

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now favor us with the hymn "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice," and following the choir number Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice."

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Brethren, it is an awesome responsibility to speak to you young men who hold the Aaronic, or the preparatory priesthood, and to you our brethren who hold the higher priesthood—the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Priesthood after the Holiest Order of God, or the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, as the scriptures describe it. I hope to call to your attention some things that we take for granted—some sacred things.

We tend to measure our progress by visible things we can count: convert baptisms, missionaries, wards and stakes, chapels. These are symbolic perhaps of the body of the Church.

There are other measures which symbolize more than the spirit of the Church—things not so easy to see or count. Let me report some of them.

The new editions of the scriptures

Early in the eighties, after ten years of intense work by a veritable army of volunteers, the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible was published. This was followed by new editions of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Early manuscripts had become available, making possible the correction of many printer errors.

The subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" was added to the Book of

Mormon. Two revelations were added to the Doctrine and Covenants, the book that will never be closed.

The text of the King James Bible was not altered. An innovative system of cross-referencing all the standard works, containing tens of thousands of footnotes which open hundreds of thousands of possible combinations of information, was added.

Bound in with it were a combined topical guide, with concordance and index, Bible dictionary, and maps. All chapters were given new headings.

The subject "Jesus Christ" in the topical guide takes eighteen pages of small print just to list the references. It is the most comprehensive compilation of scriptural information on the mission and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ that has ever been assembled in the history of the world.

An index of over four hundred pages was added to the triple combination, together with Church history maps. It was the first time in nearly a hundred years that substantive attention had been given to making the content of the scriptures more accessible to members of the Church.

The revelation on the priesthood came just in time to be bound into the new editions of the scriptures, evidence of direction from beyond the veil.

In all, 1,268 pages of helps were added to the standard works. The scriptures—comprising 86 books, 138 sections, 2 declarations, 2,540 pages, over 42,000 verses—are the library of the Lord.

Translation of the standard works into American Sign Language for the deaf is under way. A new edition of the Book of Mormon in braille is now complete. A new braille edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is finished, and the Pearl of Great Price will soon be ready. Footnotes for these braille editions are in process.

We now own a press capable of printing braille on both sides of a page; that reduces the volume by half. By computer control we can print copies on demand.

All of this is in English.

Translation of the scriptures

From the beginning of the Church, in 1830, through 1988, the standard works had been translated into thirty-five languages, with seven other languages in process. During the last year, approval has been given and budgets established to translate and publish the standard works in fifty-one additional languages.

Years of tedious work lie ahead, for each translation must be done as though it alone is important.

When completed, these translations will extend the number of people who can read the scriptures in their native tongue by an additional 2,254,000,000—half the world population. And other translations will follow.

A prototype concordance and topical guide to the scriptures with footnotes, cross-references, and the other helps has been developed for other languages. The triple combination in Spanish is nearing completion, and other languages will follow.

Audiotapes of the scriptures

Tape recordings of the standard works are available in English. One can

listen to the scriptures while working at home or driving about.

The LDSView computer software

Several years ago Monte F. Shelley and James S. Rosenvall, both professors at Brigham Young University, conceived of a way to input the scriptures into a computer data base and program them so that any word or combination of words may be called up instantly.

A logical reaction to such a proposal might have been, "Better be careful; you do not know what might come of this kind of analysis of the scriptures. We might open a Pandora's box that might never be closed. Don't do it."

That did *not* happen. We have *no* doubt about the scriptures. These brethren were urged to proceed. The result is LDSView, computerized scripture software. It is simple to operate and is capable of infinite ways of searching through, comparing, and analyzing this sacred library of the Lord. It did not open a Pandora's box; it opened the scriptures to analysis beyond anything that had been imagined.

For instance, you may key in the word *faith*. Instantly you see that it appears 696 times in the standard works. Press a key, and the verses appear before you.

Add the word *hope*. You will see that it appears forty-six times. Then add the word *charity*. It appears seventy-five times. Push a key, and you will see that *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* appear together in the same verse nineteen times. All of that has taken less than three and one-half seconds.

Select a verse, and it appears in its chapter setting. You may scroll back and forth from Genesis to the last verse in the Pearl of Great Price and, with a touch of a key, print a copy.

This does not replace the printed page. While every member may not have need for this computer program, it is a research instrument of profound importance.

And work is well underway to provide this software in Spanish, German, and other languages.

Curriculum keyed to the scriptures

Concurrent with these projects, the entire curriculum of the Church was restructured. All courses of study were revised to center on the scriptures, on Jesus Christ. Again, a veritable army of volunteers worked for more than twenty years to complete it.

Now the scriptures are the text, and, with excellent study guides, the gospel may better be taught in priesthood quorums, in the auxiliaries, in Sunday School, and preached in sacrament meetings and conferences.

The teacher development program

Good teaching is a key to this library of the Lord. Teaching skills can be learned. An excellent teacher development course was produced and is available for use in the wards. But it suffers from some neglect. Teacher development should not be neglected!

In seminary and institutes of religion, absolutely marvelous study guides have been published for students and for teachers. They adapt to both classroom and individual home study. They open the scriptures for our youth.

We live in a new age, where a third grader can demonstrate how a computer operates to his father and grandfather. Likewise, our youth now can demonstrate a facility with the scriptures, using resources we never had. This is a true measure of our progress.

Seminaries now enroll 270,000 students in more than 90 countries. Institutes of religion have been established adjacent to 1,711 colleges and universities across the world and now enroll 126,000.

Let me tell you what you are taught as you progress through seminary.

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament course, you learn of the creation and fall of man, the

foundation for the temple endowment. You learn what a prophet is. You become familiar with such words as *obedience*, *sacrifice*, *covenant*, *Aaronic*, *Melchizedek*, and *priesthood*.

The whole basis for Judaic-Christian law, indeed for Islam, is taught to you.

The "why" of tithes and offerings is explained. You read prophecies of the coming Messiah and of the restoration of the gospel. You see Elijah demonstrate the sealing power and hear Malachi prophesy that Elijah will be sent with the keys of the sealing authority.

In seminary you learn to know the Old Testament. Now almost abandoned by the Christian world, it remains to us a testament of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament

In the New Testament course, you learn of the birth and ministry of Jesus the Christ and His divine Sonship. You learn about ordinances, about baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

You read of the call of the Twelve and follow their ministry. You learn of the fatherhood of God. You learn of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and personal revelation.

You relive the days of the Betrayal and the Crucifixion, and learn transcendent truths of the Atonement and the Resurrection. You learn of love and law and why a Redeemer.

From the four Gospels to the book of Revelation, the teachings of the Master and of His Apostles—the Lord Jesus Christ's gospel—are opened to you.

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church history

In the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history course, you review the Great Apostasy and witness the restoration of the gospel. You move in sequence from the sacred grove to the Church today, fitting each section of the Doctrine and Covenants into its historical setting.

You learn of translation by the gift and power of God. You learn of keys of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods

and the keys of the sealing authority restored in fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy.

You learn of opposition and apostasy and martyrdom. You learn of calls and releases. You learn of temples and redemption of the dead, missionary work, and perfection of the Saints.

The Book of Mormon

In the next course, you are carefully led through the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. It affirms both the Old and the New Testaments. Here, more details of the doctrines of salvation, lost from them, are revealed.

In its pages justice and mercy, the Fall and the Atonement, and mortal death and spiritual death are explained. You learn of the frailties and the consummate goodness of men and of peoples.

You are taught of the still, small voice of personal revelation.

You read of the appearance of the Lord to his other sheep. And you are promised that he will "manifest the truth of [this sacred book] unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4).

All of these courses are taught in a school setting with excellent teachers. But seminary is not all study. There are some fun and games. The scripture-mastery program is sometimes called scripture chase, and, at that age, the boy-girl chase begins.

Church colleges and universities

In the institutes of religion and at Church colleges and universities, the same scripture courses are taught on a more advanced level, together with teachings of the living prophets, missionary preparation, world religions, priesthood and Church government, and many other courses.

Student branches and wards and stakes are organized to provide opportunities for you to serve.

Institute, too, has its fun and games and a course in courtship and marriage.

Now the boy-girl chase becomes more exciting because they begin to catch one another! The percentage of temple marriages among graduates of seminaries and institutes is *more than double* the Church average. I repeat: The percentage of temple marriages among the graduates of seminaries and institutes is more than double the Church average. Do you need any better endorsement than that?

All of these courses in seminary, in institute, and at Church schools are taught by dedicated teachers. They deserve our respect, our deep gratitude, and our full support. Every parent, every Church leader, should act as an enrollment agent for seminaries and institutes. Parents and priesthood leaders check on your college students. See that they attend the institute.

Years ago, I was in Arizona with Elder Kimball. He gave a powerful endorsement of seminary and institute to the people of his home stake. Afterward I said, "I will be quoting you all over the Church." He replied, "You do that. And if you can think of anything better to say, say it and quote me."

Paul prophesied that in the last days perilous times would come (see 2 Timothy 3:1). He prophesied that men would be "unholy, without natural affection, . . . despisers of those that are good, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (3:2-7).

He said that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (3:13).

Then he gave the answer to it all:

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy *scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture," Paul continued, "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (3:14-16; italics added).

The Lord said that when we read the revelations to one another, by His power we “can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words” (D&C 18:36).

These things are the true measure of our progress. Far more important than counting things we can *see* are those spiritual things we can *feel*. “Search the scriptures,” the Lord has told us, “for . . . they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

I reverently give thanks to the Lord for the revelations, the scriptures, the standard works which He has given to us

in our generation. These are the handbook for the priesthood. For you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood and you brethren of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I bear witness that He lives and that they do testify of Him. And I testify of Him, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have heard from Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will now speak to us.

Bishop Robert D. Hales

My dear brethren, I appreciate the opportunity of speaking this evening as a bishop. I would like to talk about the Aaronic Priesthood—first, what it is not. It is not an activity, and it is not a priesthood in which we advance because of age. We are advanced in the priesthood because of worthiness.

Now let us discuss what the Aaronic Priesthood is.

We prepare now to live with God

The Aaronic Priesthood years are a preparatory period of our lives when we prepare ourselves in this earth life to be worthy to return with honor to the presence of our Heavenly Father.

We cannot remember that we once lived with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and that we probably sat in meetings much like this, where the Father’s plan for us was explained. We cannot remember that Lucifer, a son of God the Father, a brother of Jesus Christ, rebelled against God’s plan and, in his rebellion, promised he would bring us all back home. But Lucifer would have denied us our agency, the freedom to make decisions. We cannot remember that his plan was not accepted by us because, without choice, there would not have been a pur-

pose for coming to this mortal probation. We would not have had opposition or repentance. We would not have learned obedience.

So we chose not to go with Lucifer because if we had, we never would have been able to progress in earth life with our objective of returning back into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

All of us on earth are winners because we chose to come to this mortal probation, which Alma described as a preparatory state (see Alma 12:24, 26; 34:32; 42:10, 13).

Understanding these concepts will give us eternal perspective when we have important choices to make.

“Return with Honor”

As a young man, I had an opportunity to serve in the U.S. Air Force as a jet-fighter pilot. Each unit in our squadron had a motto that would inspire its efforts. Our unit motto—displayed on the side of our aircraft—was “Return with Honor.” This motto was a constant reminder to us of our determination to return to our home base with honor only after having expended all of our efforts to successfully complete every aspect of our mission.

This same motto, "Return with Honor," can be applied to each of us in our eternal plan of progression. Having lived with our Heavenly Father and having come to earth life, we must have determination to return with honor to our heavenly home.

How do we return to our Heavenly Father with honor?

Just as aircraft pilots must obey certain rules in order to avoid disaster, there are laws, ordinances, and covenants we must understand and obey as we go through this earthly life—this preparatory period—if we are to reach our goal of eternal life.

The preparatory gospel is that important part of the total gospel plan which gives us an opportunity to prepare ourselves for greater service, receiving the ordinances of the holy temple, and gaining eternal life.

Prepare with faith and obedience

The fourth article of faith outlines the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. They are:

"First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a man of great faith, said, "*Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness. . . . The greater the measure of obedience to God's laws the greater will be the endowment of [the gift of] faith*" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 264).

In other words, obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel is essential to obtain faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine and Covenants stresses this very important point of obedience in a very simple way. The Lord says: "Keep my commandments continually. . . . And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come" (D&C 25:15).

The Lord tells us plainly, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Knowledge and practice beforehand

In pilot training, we spent hours in a training device that simulated real flight. There an instructor would teach us about emergencies which could occur when flying a jet-fighter at the speed of sound. For each emergency, we were taught the procedures for avoiding disaster. We would practice each procedure over and over so that when a real emergency came, we would have developed what was called an automatic, or conditioned, response. We would know exactly what to do if the fire-warning light lit up or the panel indicated some other technical failure in the airplane. We would even pre-determine the safe altitude at which we would bail out if the plane were on fire or out of control.

This training process can be compared to the lessons we learn in our homes and in the quorums of the Aaronic Priesthood—the preparatory period of our lives.

We are here at priesthood meeting this evening to learn those things which are necessary to prepare us to be strong and dedicated priesthood holders. We are preparing ourselves to take on higher laws and covenants such as obedience, sacrifice, service, chastity, and consecration of our time and talents. Why do we do this? We should learn this before we go to the temple, brethren, because afterward it will help each of us to be valiant missionaries, caring eternal companions, and devoted fathers. We are preparing to return with honor to the presence of our Heavenly Father along with our entire families.

Following is an incident that illustrates what could happen if we do not use this preparatory time wisely.

Those who do not prepare

I had a dear friend, an all-American football player. His team earned the op-

portunity to play in a New Year's Day bowl game. Before 100,000 spectators and a large TV audience, his team lost by a huge score. It turned out that he and the other members of his team had not kept the training rules that their coach had tried to teach them. They paid a dear price. They had to live with the consequences of knowing they were not prepared to play the big game; they had to live with the final, very embarrassing score.

Years passed. Two members of this same football team were in my flight-training unit. One was an exemplary, well-disciplined student—a model pilot who had learned his lesson well from the failure in the bowl game.

However, the other friend had not learned to listen to those with more knowledge and more experience. When it came time for him to go to the trainer to learn emergency procedures and to precondition his mental and physical responses so that they would be automatic, even instantaneous, this all-American would put his arm around the instructor and say, "Check me off for three hours of emergency procedure." Then, instead of training, he would go to the swimming pool, pistol range, or golf course. Later in the training the instructor said to him, "What are you going to do when there is an emergency and you are not prepared?" His answer, "I am never going to bail out; I am never going to have an emergency." He never learned the emergency procedures which he should have mastered in preparatory training.

A few months later, on an evening mission, fire erupted in the quiet sky over Texas. The fire-warning light lit up. When the plane dropped to 5,000 feet in flames, the young pilot who was with him said, "Let's get out of here." And, with centrifugal force pulling against him, the young man who took his training seriously struggled to get out of the airplane and bailed out. His parachute opened at once. And he slammed to the ground. He received serious injuries but survived.

My friend who had not felt the need to train stayed with the airplane and died

in the crash. He paid the price for not having learned the lessons that could have saved his life.

The fire-warning lights in life

When fire-warning lights come on in our lives, our eternal progress may be blocked, the price we pay for neglecting the warning. If we ignore the warning lights in our lives, we may not return with honor.

Fire-warning lights of a personal nature are activated for many reasons. For example, the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs should turn on warning lights because, when we choose to use these substances, we become slaves; our agency is limited. We must be prepared with a conditioned response to reject them—they are harmful agents—or we will jeopardize our right to have the spirit guide us and direct us and our ability to return to our Heavenly Father with honor.

Choosing and being true friends

Sometimes choosing good friends is difficult, but the important choices we make in our lives are influenced by our friends. We cannot excuse our conduct because of the actions of our friends or because of the pressure they place upon us.

Do you know how to recognize a true friend? A real friend loves us and protects us.

In recognizing a true friend, we must look for two important elements in that friendship:

A true friend makes it easier for us to live the gospel by being around him.

Similarly, a true friend does not make us choose between his way and the Lord's way. A true friend will help us return with honor.

By applying these two fundamental principles to our selection of friends, we can determine what kind of friends we will have and what kind of friend we will be.

As Aaronic Priesthood holders, what kind of friend are we? Are we the type of friend who always makes sure

that those around us know it will be easier for them to live gospel principles, such as the Word of Wisdom or the law of chastity, when they are with us? Do our friends know that they will never have to choose between what we want them to do and what the Lord would have them do?

There is nothing more heartbreaking to a bishop or a parent than to have a young woman say the young man she loved and trusted most told her that if she really loved him, she would prove it by violating with him sacred laws of morality. May we this evening resolve that when fire-warning lights of this nature come on in our lives, we will have made up our minds to do the right thing—to remember who we are and to act accordingly.

Aaronic Priesthood responsibilities

Learning your Aaronic Priesthood responsibilities well is like the experience of a student pilot when he is in the trainer. The Aaronic Priesthood holder should be preconditioned with an automatic response to keep gospel standards. He will know what his response is going to be, and the adversary will not triumph over him because he will have preconditioned himself to keep the commandments even when he is under stress.

I hope that Aaronic Priesthood holders can understand the importance of preparing, blessing, and passing the sacrament to the members of the Church. It is so important that we do so with clean hands and a pure heart. It is so important that the young men with whom we serve in the Aaronic Priesthood know we are doing so worthily and that every member in the congregation can look toward the sacrament table and trust that the members of the priesthood are worthy to perform the ordinances of the Lord.

The covenants of the sacrament

Each Sunday, as we participate in the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, we promise three things as the blessings

over the bread and water are given by a priest. In the prayer, the voice of the priest at the table is for all in the room so that each of us can renew our covenants.

First, we promise that we will always remember our Savior, Jesus Christ, and his atoning sacrifice for us.

Second, we take upon us once again the name of Jesus Christ, allowing us to renew our baptismal covenant.

Third, we promise that we will keep his commandments, renewing our covenants of obedience (see D&C 20:77–79).

If we keep these three promises, we are given one of the greatest blessings that can be bestowed upon us: that we will have his Spirit to be with us always, meaning that we will have the Holy Ghost in our lives to guide us and protect us and direct us each day.

The reason why we come to sacrament meeting each week is to renew these covenants so that we can have his spirit to be with us and remain on the strait and narrow path that leads us to eternal life—to return with honor (see 2 Nephi 31:17–21).

We must do all the Father asks

I have stressed the importance of obedience. However, as important as obedience is, sometimes people are deceived and choose to be selectively obedient. A young man may recognize that he must be obedient, yet selectively do only part of what he is commanded to do.

The Lord tells us in 2 Nephi the following:

“Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.

“And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last

we shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Nephi 28:7-8).

My brethren, this is deception, as the Lord has taught us. Wickedness—not even a little wickedness—never was happiness (see Alma 41:10). And it never will be. Wickedness prevents us from returning with honor to our Father in Heaven.

Remember, the Lord told us: "Keep my commandments continually, . . . And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come" (D&C 25:15).

Obedience brings great blessings

Many young men enter the mission field having made great sacrifices. They may have had to postpone athletic, artistic, scholarship, and career plans. There may be great financial sacrifice on the part of the family. They may have even left a young lady whom they loved dearly and whom they may lose to some other young man who comes home from the mission field first.

But no matter how much an individual or family may sacrifice for a mission or anything else, unless missionaries choose obedience, consecrating all of their time, talents, and resources in the service of the Lord while they are in the mission field, they cannot fully realize all the great blessings the Lord has in store for them. But it will be much more effective if they learn to be obedient before they go to the mission field.

Elder Kenneth Johnson

I know that this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God. I just didn't plan to be this close so early.

The invitations in our lives

As I collect my thoughts in this new assignment, they go to my peer group—the young men of the Church. I think back just a few years when I was sixteen years old and a printing apprentice. A fellow apprentice was totally engrossed in motorcycles. In those days we rode

In order to return with honor, we need the Spirit of the Holy Ghost to be with us each day. You who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, be obedient and exercise your free agency righteously. Be worthy and be prepared to perform your calling well.

As a father, I put my arms around each of my boys as they left to serve their missions and whispered in their ears, "Return with honor." I can picture our Father in Heaven putting his arms around each of us as we left his presence and whispering, "Return with honor."

That we will remember who we are and be obedient to the commandments of the Lord and return with honor into the presence of our Heavenly Father with our families is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have appreciated that excellent address by Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

It will now be our opportunity to hear first from Elder Kenneth Johnson and then from Elder Clinton L. Cutler, sustained this afternoon as members of the Seventy.

Elder Johnson calls England his home, and Brother Cutler is currently serving as the president of the Washington Seattle Mission.

British motorcycles, and he had an AJS-350.

One sunny summer's day, he said to me, "Would you like to come for a ride on my motorcycle?" That seemed to be a good idea. In those days we didn't wear any protective clothing, and, thus very lightly clad, I became the passenger on his motorcycle. He weaved through the streets of Norwich and then came to a long, straight road. He leaned back and said to me, "Have you ever traveled at one hundred miles an hour?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Well, you're going to."

I said, "We don't have to."

He began to rev the motorcycle, and the motorcycle roared forward. The skin on my face pulled tight, and the clothing blew as we went past ninety-eight to one hundred miles an hour. I determined that day that never again would I let somebody else control my life.

Invitations to come unto Christ

Young men, make sure that every invitation you extend and every invitation you receive is an invitation to come unto Christ.

In 1959 I received that invitation. I did not even know of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At a dance I met a young lady who was raised in the gospel. I was attracted to her. She said to me, "You know, I could never consider marrying you unless it were in the temple." I responded to that invitation and was taught the gospel. She is now my eternal companion. I will ever be grateful that was the invitation she extended to me, for it has transformed my life.

We have one child, a son. We got such a good one the first time we were not blessed with any more. And I have seen him grow through the covenants of the Lord. I walked with him through the temple. I saw him serve a mission. I

look forward to July when he takes his chosen companion to the temple. The way he has lived has caused me to come unto Christ.

Young men, you have a great power within you to do that. Let me say to you that more sacred to me than this call, and I cannot fully express how sacred it is, are the covenants that preceded it and that will extend beyond it, for they seal to me those things most precious and sacred in my life.

The British Isles are full of young men and young women who will play a significant part in the forwarding of this great work in a way that no one else could. I know that they will do this if they respond to an invitation to come unto Christ.

Like Jacob of old, having received my errand from the Lord, I will magnify my office unto him, taking upon me the responsibility, answering the sins of the people on my own head if I do not teach them the word of God in all diligence (see Jacob 1:17-19).

I know that Jesus lives, that he is the Christ, and that he leads this church. I have come to know these things because so many good people have extended to me the invitation through my life to come unto him, and this I have tried to do. I express these feelings in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Clinton L. Cutler

Memories from childhood

My dear brethren, these past few days I have taken a stroll down memory lane. I went back forty-seven years ago in my memory to this sacred building where, as a deacon, members of my quorum and I rode the bus from Midvale to attend general conference. In those days during the war years of World War II, we could arrive here at ten minutes to the hour and still have a seat. I remember the feelings we had in those years, as the

Brethren didn't enter the pulpit area from the rear; they would walk up the aisles. I recall one Sunday that as we stood outside, a big, tall brother entered through the little gate on the east of Temple Square. It was President George Albert Smith, then serving as President of the Quorum of the Twelve. He walked up to us and visited with us and patted us on the shoulder. I have never forgotten the feelings I had when an Apostle of the Lord took the time to talk to four deacons in from the farm.

Over those intervening years as I have taken that stroll down memory lane, I have listed the many miracles that have occurred in my life and that I have witnessed. My thoughts go out in gratitude to that loving Father, the Father of us all, who stands with arms outstretched, cheering us on, asking us to come home to him and to his beloved Son, our Savior.

I think of all those choice souls: my mother, who at eighty-one still is the pacesetter in our family as she leads the way for her children to follow; teachers; advisers; and many dear associates over those many years.

The great joy of the Lord's word

It is more apparent to me now than ever that, as Alma of old declared, the word of the Lord and the preaching of his word has a greater tendency to lead the people to do that which is just. It has a more powerful effect than even the sword or anything else (see Alma 31:5). This I have seen in the lives of those choice missionaries that I have had the privilege the past almost-three years to serve with—additional sons and daughters added to our family circle, sons and daughters that Sister Cutler and I love with all our hearts. I have seen that miracle happen over and over again as the word of the Lord is taught to his children and those of his flock who hear his voice and have a change of heart and come unto him.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It is the greatest joy, the only pure joy, we

have in this life. As we embrace it and all things we hold dear—families, loved ones—all else is wrapped in that great package of love from a Father on high who loves us.

I conclude with a testimony I heard this past week from three recent converts who bore their testimonies with tears in their eyes for the knowledge they have gained in just a few short months. They testified that Heavenly Father does live, that he cares, that Jesus is the Christ and that, yes, they have a road map and a pattern to follow, and it is contained in the Book of Mormon—that blueprint given to bring them safely home. They testified that Joseph Smith is the Prophet of this dispensation and that today, standing as the mouthpiece of the Lord, is President Ezra Taft Benson. I join with them in this testimony, for I know it all to be true with all my heart because of the life and the blessings that I have been granted. I bear you this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Kenneth Johnson and Clinton L. Cutler of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which we shall hear from Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen

A year ago when I was called as a Seventy, a nonmember patient of mine asked me an interesting question. She wanted to know if a Seventy was higher or lower in the Mormon Church than a bishop. When I asked her why she would ask such a question, she replied that she was interested to know just what I'd be doing. She said she understood that in the Mormon Church, every calling from

a bishop on down was all work, and everyone from a bishop on up was all talk. This may be the reason for my wanting to *talk*, tonight, to you Aaronic Priesthood brethren.

The example of Sneaky

Many of you during your lifetime have had a pet that may have come to a

tragic end, with sad moments following. Some years ago while traveling on a family vacation, we acquired a rather unusual pet, which was a small, friendly, not-too-long water snake from the beaches of Puget Sound. My children named him Sneaky, as short for Sneaky Snake.

Early one morning while the family was off walking near the motel, Sneaky somehow got out of his cardboard box. When the room attendant entered to tidy up the room in our absence, Sneaky, seeing the open door, headed for it. She slammed the door shut in absolute terror, and since Sneaky got caught in the door, we might say he came all apart.

It was the end of Sneaky, the beginning of a nervous breakdown for the girl attendant, and a time of weeping and disappointment on the part of our children.

Now there is a lesson here. The attendant had erroneously perceived Sneaky as something less than the friend he was.

Friends and the Word of Wisdom

We've heard from Bishop Hales tonight about true friends. May I add a thought or two about them? All of us may have been at one time or other confused as to just who our true friends are. Let me give you an example of what I mean as it relates to the Word of Wisdom.

Some years ago in my medical office I had occasion to examine a young man who was approximately the same age as you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I was puzzled by what seemed to be his medical problem.

After several tests and x-rays, I found *myself* amazed at the diagnosis. He was an alcoholic at his young age.

He told me that he had begun having alcoholic drinks at a very early age due to the encouragement of his so-called friends.

I wondered to myself, Are friends that encourage us to break the Word of Wisdom really our true friends?

Phrases like "just try it once" or "everybody does it" or "who is going to

know" are all too commonly used. If they were true friends, would they pressure us that way?

Indeed, in life it may be difficult to tell at times just who our true friends are. Were my young patient's friends the kind he should strive to keep? The room attendant perceived Sneaky as a potentially harmful enemy instead of a friend, and yet the reverse was true.

A true friend of yours and mine gave us the Word of Wisdom through his Prophet Joseph Smith.

Medical research tells us that by far the majority of young people who begin using alcohol or tobacco products do so with the urging of their friends.

The Lord knows what is best for us

The Lord has told us that neither strong drinks, meaning alcoholic drinks, nor tobacco are for the body and that they are not good for man.

Let me talk to you rather plainly, my young friends. As a physician, who for forty years has witnessed firsthand the truth of those statements in the Word of Wisdom, I testify that they are true.

The beautiful scenes in magazine advertisements are not what the end results of cigarette smoking prove to be. This advertising in these magazines and newspapers is very deceptive. The end results are not nearly so pretty. They are oxygen masks and intravenous medication and literally hours of pain, misery, and gasping for breath.

Remember that approximately 5,000 people a day quit smoking, and another 1,000—every single day—die from cigarette smoking, or one in every ninety seconds, in the United States alone. This means that each day 6,000 people either kick the habit or kick the bucket. No wonder the cigarette companies spend billions to keep their unwitting customers buying their lethal wares.

I had my own comment printed and pasted on all cigarette advertising in the magazines of my medical office waiting room. It states:

"Many of the ads in this magazine are misleading, deceptive, and are a rip-off. For example, smoking does not make one glamorous, macho, or athletic. It does make one sick, poor, and dead."

How true this is.

The heavy price of little things

Smoking is indeed becoming less and less popular as the heavy smokers one by one pass on. If an industrial accident killed everyone in the entire Salt Lake Valley, the nation would be horrified. That, however, is the scale of the annual tobacco disaster. One out of every six people that die in the United States dies as a result of smoking.

Almost inevitably, the user of hard drugs begins first with alcohol or tobacco, both of which are drugs of the highly addicting kind themselves.

In addition, the real damage from the use of these things is usually even more severe to our spiritual lives than it is to our physical bodies. Now, would a true friend be one to entice you to use them? I'm sure he wouldn't.

The value of a true friend

Look closely at your friends. Cultivate good friends. They're so valuable. Remember the Savior valued his friends so highly that he would lay down his life for them. He had this to say about friends:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

And then he went on to say:

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (15:14-15).

Friendship is an extremely important part of your life. Someone has said a true friend is someone who makes it easier to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Help your friends live righteously

Many of you young men will be, at some time or another, approached by one or more of your "friends" who will entice you to do something you know you should not do—it might be something you know deep down inside will hurt your parents and your Father in Heaven. It may be violating the Word of Wisdom, for example, or committing moral transgression, which is so displeasing to the Lord.

"No one will ever know," the so-called friends will tell you. "Besides, what difference will it make?"

My young friends, you don't have to reject your friends who are on the wrong path; you don't even have to give them up necessarily. You can be their caring friend, ready to help them when they are ready to be helped. You can talk to them and lift them and bear your testimony to them. Lead them by example.

But don't ever be led into displeasing your Father in Heaven by your friends who might ask that as a condition of being your friend, you must choose between their way and the Lord's way.

If that happens, choose the Lord's way and look for new friends.

True friends stand by each other

Especially important are our friends in times of need when we may have feelings of loneliness or despair. True friends will stand by you. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was incarcerated in that terrible Liberty Jail, he was told by the Lord:

"Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands.

"Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression, as they did Job" (D&C 121:9-10).

Knowing his friends would stand by him was a great assurance to Joseph Smith during this trying experience.

Some of the most trusted and loving friends you will ever have on this earth

are your parents and family. It may be that only when you have children of your own will you fully appreciate the bonds of love that exist between parents and children.

You'll find as you grow into manhood that advice from your parents as to who should or should not be your true friends will be very reliable and valuable to you.

The Lord is our best friend

Cultivate our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ as your friend above all. Being his friend will without exception lift your vision and bring you comfort, guidance, peace, and, yes, even the companionship of other true friends.

I know something of his love, his compassion, his mercy, and the help one may receive from him and the Holy Spirit. He has promised that by obedience to his word, you "shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19).

President Thomas S. Monson

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Holy Bible is an inspiration to me. This sacred book has inspired the minds of men and has motivated readers to live the commandments of God and to love one another. It is printed in greater quantities, is translated into more languages, and has touched more human hearts than any other volume.

Particularly do I enjoy reading from the book of Genesis the account describing the creation of the world. Ponder the power of that culminating declaration: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them" (Genesis 1:27-28).

Joy turns to sadness as we learn of Abel's tragic death at the hands of his brother Cain. Chapters of counsel, lessons for living, guidance from God are found in one brief verse: "And the Lord

Just think! With Jesus as your friend, you may receive increased strength and testimony that will uphold you against temptations when they arise.

Choose your friends wisely. They will provide the foundation of spiritual strength that will enable you to make difficult, extremely important decisions correctly when they come in your life.

Above all, be a friend of the Savior. You, my young men, are the honored holders of a royal priesthood. If you have not done so previously, now is the time to let him know you consider him your true friend and that you will be a true friend of his.

That we may all qualify to be his disciples, his friends, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen of the Seventy has just spoken to us, and President Benson has indicated that I should now address you.

said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9).

Joseph was his brothers' keeper

These two significant questions are asked, then answered, in themes taught throughout the scriptures. One such example is found in the life of Joseph and his brothers. We will recall that Joseph was especially loved by his father, Jacob, which occasioned bitterness and jealousy on the part of his brothers. There followed the plot to slay him, which eventually placed Joseph in a pit without food and without water to sustain life. Upon the arrival of a passing caravan of merchants, Joseph's brothers determined to sell him rather than to leave him to die. Twenty pieces of silver extricated Joseph from the pit and placed him eventually in

the house of Potiphar in the land of Egypt. There Joseph prospered, for "the Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:2).

After the years of plenty, there followed the years of famine. In the midst of this latter period, when the brothers of Joseph came to Egypt to buy corn, they were blessed by this favored man in Egypt—even their own brother. Joseph could have dealt harshly with his brethren for the callous and cruel treatment he had earlier received from them. However, he was kind and gracious to his brethren and won their favor and support with these words and actions:

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . .

"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God. . . .

"Moreover [Joseph] kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him" (Genesis 45:5, 7–8, 15).

They had found their brother. Joseph in very deed was his brothers' keeper.

Other brother's keepers

In the touching account of the good Samaritan, Jesus teaches vividly the interpretation of the lesson, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19). Answered effectively is the haunting question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

An entire vista of opportunity is unfolded to our view when we contemplate the magnitude of King Benjamin's admonition, recorded in the Book of Mormon: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

Just last week the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve were provided the opportunity to view the new Church history exhibit situated in the mu-

seum just west of Temple Square. I loved the replica of the entry to the Fourth Ward—one of the original wards in the valley. I noted with keen interest the lighted map which plotted the pioneer trek from Nauvoo. However, my heart was truly touched when I gazed at an actual handcart displayed in a place of honor. The handcart communicated to me a silent yet eloquent account of its long and momentous journey.

The Martin Handcart Company

Let us for a moment join Captain Edward Martin and the handcart company he led. While we will not feel the pangs of hunger which they felt or experience the bitter cold that penetrated their weary bodies, we will emerge from our visit with a better appreciation of hardship borne, courage demonstrated, and faith fulfilled. We will witness with tear-filled eyes a dramatic answer to the question "Am I my brother's keeper?"

"The handcarts moved on November 3 and reached the river, filled with floating ice. To cross would require more courage and fortitude, it seemed, than human nature could muster. Women shrank back and men wept. Some pushed through, but others were unequal to the ordeal.

"Three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue; and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of that ill-fated handcart company across the snow-bound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly, 'That act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end' " (LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion* [Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1960], pp. 132–33).

The simple ways we care for others

Our service to others may not be so dramatic, but we can bolster human spirits, clothe cold bodies, feed hungry people, comfort grieving hearts, and lift to new heights precious souls.

Junius Burt of Salt Lake City, a longtime worker in the Streets Department, related a touching and inspirational experience. He declared that on a cold winter morning, the street cleaning crew of which he was a member was removing large chunks of ice from the street gutters. The regular crew was assisted by temporary laborers who desperately needed the work. One such wore only a lightweight sweater and was suffering from the cold. A slender man with a well-groomed beard stopped by the crew and asked the worker, "You need more than that sweater on a morning like this. Where is your coat?" The man replied that he had no coat to wear. The visitor then removed his own overcoat, handed it to the man and said, "This coat is yours. It is heavy wool and will keep you warm. I just work across the street." The street was South Temple. The good Samaritan who walked into the Church Administration Building to his daily work and without his coat was President George Albert Smith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His selfless act of generosity revealed his tender heart. Surely he was his brother's keeper.

The many riches we can share

In December of 1989, the beautiful and long-awaited Las Vegas temple was dedicated in inspiring sessions, which continued for three days. The messages and music in the dedicatory sessions lifted each heart heavenward and prompted the listener to keep the commandments of God and to emulate the example of righteous living taught by Jesus of Nazareth. Thoughts of self yielded to consideration for others. One sermon stressed the injunction of the Lord as recorded in Matthew:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth

corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

After the session during which this passage of scripture had been presented, a hand-written letter, carefully tucked away in a sealed envelope, was handed to me by an usher. May I share with you the contents of this touching letter:

"Dear President Monson:

"My husband and I feel the completion and dedication of this beautiful Las Vegas Nevada Temple is the finest gift we could receive during this sacred season. Temples are such a sweet gift to all the world; and as you spoke of righteous Saints who are worthy to obtain the blessings of the Lord's house but lack the financial means to attend a temple, our hearts were so touched.

"President Monson, there must be a family somewhere who needs to attend the temple, because as my dear companion and I spoke of our great joy during this special Christmas season, we both commented as to how any store-bought gift would pale in comparison to what we have received in these dedicatory services. Instead of spending our budgeted Christmas funds for some gift from a local store, we would like to give you this \$500 to help some family waiting to be endowed and sealed for all eternity. We appreciate your assisting us in our gifts to each other this year."

The letter was unsigned. The givers remain anonymous. Perhaps today this brother may be viewing this session of general conference. If so, he may be pleased to learn that this gift has made it possible for a worthy family from the Villa Real District of the Portugal Porto Mission to journey to the temple and receive their precious temple blessings. To the unknown givers of this priceless gift I extend my thanks for being your

brother's keeper. I have the inner feeling that your Christmas season was marked by joy and filled with peace.

Strangers can also be brothers

We have no way of knowing when our privilege to extend a helping hand will unfold before us. The road to Jericho each of us travels bears no name, and the weary traveler who needs our help may be one unknown. Altogether too frequently the recipient of kindness shown fails to express his feelings, and we are deprived of a glimpse of greatness and a touch of tenderness that motivates us to go and do likewise. Genuine gratitude was expressed by the writer of a letter received recently at Church headquarters. No return address was shown, but the postmark was from Portland, Oregon:

"To the Office of the First Presidency:

"Salt Lake City showed me Christian hospitality once during my wandering years.

"On a cross-country journey by bus to California, I stepped down in the terminal in Salt Lake City, sick and trembling from aggravated loss of sleep caused by a lack of necessary medication. In my headlong flight from a bad situation in Boston, I had completely forgotten my supply.

"In the Temple Square Hotel restaurant, I sat dejectedly, cheekbones propped on fists, staring at a cup of coffee I really didn't want. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a couple approach my table. 'Are you all right, young man?' the woman asked. I raised up, crying and a bit shaken, and related my story and the predicament I was in then. They listened carefully and patiently to my nearly incoherent ramblings, and then they took charge. They must have been prominent citizens. They spoke with the restaurant manager, then told me I could have all I wanted to eat there for five days. They took me next door to the hotel desk and got me a room for five days. Then they drove me to a clinic and saw that I was provided with the medications I needed —

truly my basic lifeline to sanity and comfort.

"While I was recuperating and building my strength, I made it a point to attend the daily Tabernacle organ recitals. The celestial voicing of that instrument from the faintest intonation to the mighty full organ is the most sublime sonority of my acquaintance. I have acquired albums and tapes of the Tabernacle organ and the choir which I can rely upon any time to soothe and buttress a sagging spirit.

"On my last day at the hotel, before I resumed my journey, I turned in my key; and there was a message for me from that couple: 'Repay us by showing gentle kindness to some other troubled soul along your road.' That was my habit, but I determined to be more keenly on the lookout for someone who needed a lift in life.

"I wish you well. I don't know if these are indeed the 'latter days' spoken of in the scriptures, but I do know that two members of your church were saints to me in my desperate hours of need. I just thought you might like to know."

What a touching account. There comes to mind the experience of Jesus, when ten lepers were cleansed.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

"And fell down on his face at his feet. . . .

"And [Jesus] said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:15-16, 19).

Helping others requires patience

The desire to help another, the quest for the lost sheep, may not always yield success at once. On occasion progress is slow—even indiscernible. Such was the experience of my longtime friend Gil Warner. He was serving as a newly called bishop when "Douglas," a member of his ward, transgressed and was deprived of his Church membership. Father was saddened; Mother was totally devastated. Douglas soon thereafter moved

from the state. The years hurried by, but Bishop Warner, now a member of a high council, never ceased to wonder what had become of Douglas.

In 1975, I attended the stake conference of the Parleys stake and held a priesthood leadership meeting early on the Sunday morning. I spoke of the Church discipline system and the need to labor earnestly and lovingly to rescue any who had strayed. Gil Warner asked to speak and then outlined the story of Douglas. He concluded with the question, "Who has the responsibility to work with Douglas and bring him back to Church membership?" Gil advised me later that my response to his question was direct and given without hesitation: "It is your responsibility, Gil, for you were his bishop, and he knew you cared."

Unbeknownst to Gil Warner, Douglas's mother had, the previous week, fasted and prayed that a man would be raised up to help save her son. Gil discovered this when he felt prompted to call her to report his determination to be of help.

Gil began his odyssey of redemption. Douglas was contacted by him. Old times, happy times, were remembered. Testimony was expressed, love was conveyed, and confidence instilled. The pace was excruciatingly slow. Discouragement frequently entered the scene; but, step by step, Douglas made headway. At long last prayers were answered, efforts rewarded, and victory attained. Douglas was approved for baptism.

The baptismal date was set, family members gathered, and former bishop Gil Warner flew to Seattle for the occasion. Can we appreciate the supreme joy felt by Bishop Warner as he, dressed in white, stood with Douglas in water waist-deep and, raising his right arm to the square, repeated those sacred words, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 20:73).

He that was lost was found. A twenty-six-year mission, marked by love and pursued with determination, had been successfully completed. Gil Warner said to me, "This was one of the greatest days of my life. I know the joy promised by the Lord when He declared, 'And if it so be that you should labor all your days . . . and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!'" (D&C 18:15).

Were the Lord to say to Gil Warner today, as He said to Adam's son long years ago, "Where is Douglas, thy brother?" Bishop Warner could reply, "I am my brother's keeper, Lord. Behold Douglas, Thy son."

May all of us who hold the priesthood of God demonstrate by our lives that we are our brothers' keepers, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

Before President Hinckley speaks, we remind you that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. tomorrow. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which follows must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Listen carefully, brethren. Because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tomorrow, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the combined institute men's choir for the beautiful music this evening.

Following President Hinckley's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Beautiful Savior," and the benediction will be offered by Elder Monte J. Brough of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, I commend to you that which we have heard from those who have spoken to us this evening. We have received much of counsel and inspiration, applicable to both men and boys.

On a number of occasions in years past, I have directed my remarks in these priesthood meetings to those of the Aaronic Priesthood. This evening, if they will excuse me, I have chosen to address the men, with the hope that there may be some long-term value for the young men.

A credit card with the Lord

I hold before you two credit cards. Most of you are familiar with cards such as these.

The first is a bank credit card. It permits me to secure merchandise on credit and then pay for my purchases at one time. It is a valuable thing and something to be safeguarded. If stolen and dishonestly used, it could cause me great loss and perhaps considerable embarrassment. In accepting it from my bank, I enter into a contract and become bound by obligations and agreements. In accepting the card, I agree to meet the conditions under which it was issued.

It is issued for one year only and must be reissued each year if I am to enjoy the privileges afforded by it. It is not really mine. The bank retains ownership. If I fail in my required performance, then the bank may shut off the credit and repossess the card.

The other card which I have is what we call a temple recommend. It represents a credit card with the Lord, making available to me many of His greatest gifts. The bank card is concerned with things of the world, the recommend with things of God.

Eligibility for a temple recommend

To secure a temple recommend, the receiver must also have demonstrated his eligibility, and that eligibility is based on personal worthiness. Once granted, it is

not in place forever but must be reissued each year. Furthermore, it is subject to forfeiture if the holder does anything which would disqualify him for its privileges.

Eligibility for a temple recommend is not based on financial worth. That has nothing whatever to do with it. It is based on consistent personal behavior, on the goodness of one's life. It is not concerned with money matters, but rather with things of eternity.

The bank card opens the door to financial credit. The temple recommend opens the door to the House of the Lord. It is concerned with entry into holy precincts to do sacred and divine work.

I fear that some people are granted temple recommends before they are really prepared for them. I feel that sometimes we unduly rush people to the temple. Converts and those who have recently come into activity need a substantial measure of maturity in the Church. They need understanding of the grand concepts of the eternal gospel. They need to have demonstrated over a period of time their capacity to discipline their lives in such a way as to be worthy to enter the house of the Lord, for the obligations there assumed are eternal. For this reason, many years ago the First Presidency determined that a convert to the Church should wait a year following baptism before going to the House of the Lord. It was the expectation that during that year he or she would have grown in understanding as well as in capacity to exercise that measure of self-discipline which would result in personal worthiness. In 1833 the Lord revealed the following to the Prophet Joseph:

"Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that a house should be built unto me . . . for the salvation of Zion. . . .

"And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

"Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

"But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples" (D&C 97:10, 12, 15-17).

This, I submit, is descriptive and definitive and forceful language from the Lord concerning His holy house.

"Keep His house holy!"

Each of our temples has on its face the statement, "Holiness to the Lord," to which I should like to add the injunction, "Keep His house holy!"

I submit that every man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood has an obligation to see that the house of the Lord is kept sacred and free of any defilement. This obligation rests primarily and inescapably upon the shoulders of bishops and stake presidents. They become the judges of worthiness concerning those eligible to enter the temple. Additionally, each of us has an obligation—first, as to his own personal worthiness, and second, as to the worthiness of those whom he may encourage or assist in going to the house of the Lord.

The great importance of worthiness

In earlier times, Presidents of the Church felt so strongly about this matter that they required that the President of the Church himself personally sign each recommend. With the growth of the Church, that became impractical. I read to you a circular letter addressed to presidents of stakes and bishops of wards under date of November 10, 1891:

"Dear Brethren: It has been decided that it is no longer necessary for those going to the Temple to attend to ordinances therein to send their recommends to President Woodruff, to be by him endorsed. The signatures of the Bishop and Stake President will be all that is required.

"This being the decision, Bishops of Wards and Presidents of Stakes will see

the increased necessity for care, so that no unworthy person will be recommended for ordinances in the Temples.

"[Signed] Your brethren, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 3:229).

At that time, there were three operating temples in the Church—St. George, Manti, and Logan. The Salt Lake Temple had not yet been dedicated. We now have forty-three operating temples. If in 1891 it became too burdensome for the President of the Church to endorse all temple recommends, think of what the situation would be today. But regardless of the number or the circumstances, the issuance and signing of a temple recommend must never become a commonplace thing.

Temple concerns things of eternity

This small document, simple in its appearance, certifies that the bearer has met certain precise and demanding qualifications and is eligible to enter the house of the Lord and there participate in the most sacred ordinances administered anywhere on earth. These ordinances are concerned not only with the things of life, but with the things of eternity. Only in the house of the Lord is the fulness of the everlasting priesthood exercised with authority reaching beyond the veil of death.

Everything that occurs in the temple is eternal in its consequences. We there deal with matters of immortality, with things of eternity, with things of man and his relationship to his Divine Parent and his Redeemer. Hands must be clean and hearts must be pure and thoughts concerned with the solemnities of eternity when in these sacred premises.

Here is taught the great plan of man's eternal journey. Here are solemnized covenants sacred and everlasting.

Entering the temple is a privilege to be earned and not a right that automatically goes with Church membership.

How does one earn that privilege? By obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Tithing and the Word of Wisdom

As you know, it is expected that everyone who applies for a temple recommend will be asked certain specific questions to determine his or her worthiness. It goes without saying that there must be total honesty on the part of those who are interrogated. The questions are not to cause embarrassment and should not do so. Bishops are cautioned against indiscreetly prying into highly personal and sensitive matters. But at the same time, the bishop must be assured that the applicant is worthy to enter the house of the Lord.

Some of these questions are specific in their nature. These concern such things as tithing and the Word of Wisdom.

Of course, one is expected to be a full-tithe payer. The payment of tithing is simply a faithful response to a commandment of the Lord. It is a mark of obedience to the divine will. Furthermore, long observation has shown that the faithful and honest payment of tithing is an indicator of faithfulness in other matters.

Is observance of the Word of Wisdom necessary? The Brethren have long felt that it certainly must be. Observance of the Word of Wisdom is concerned with the care of one's body, which, the Lord has assured, is of itself a temple, a tabernacle of the spirit. He has said, "Yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple" (D&C 93:35).

I recall a bishop's telling me of a woman who came to get a recommend. When asked if she observed the Word of Wisdom, she said that she occasionally drank a cup of coffee. She said, "Now, bishop, you're not going to let that keep me from going to the temple, are you?" To which he replied, "Sister, surely you

will not let a cup of coffee stand between you and the house of the Lord."

Tithing and the Word of Wisdom deal with straightforward and easily comprehended things. There are other matters, somewhat more subtle, but of even greater importance. They concern our basic honesty, our basic integrity, the degree to which we accept and live the laws of God which are incorporated in the teachings of the Church.

Sustaining Church leaders

Do we sustain our local and General Authorities? This is not concerned with an exercise in paying homage to those whom the Lord has called to preside. It is a basic question of recognition of the fact that God has called a prophet to stand at the head of His church, that he has called others to work with him on a general level, and that that which they espouse and teach comes of unitedly praying together, pondering together, seeking the will of the Lord, receiving that will, and following it.

Likewise, unless there is loyalty toward the bishop and stake president on a local level, there will be an absence of harmony, there will be suspicion and hesitation to serve with fidelity, there will be that kind of division which is always destructive of faith. Let it ever be remembered that no President of this church, no Counselor in the Presidency, no General Authority, no member of a stake presidency or of a bishopric or of an elders quorum presidency is there because he wished to be there and requested the privilege. Each is there because he was "called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof" (Articles of Faith 1:5).

Loyalty to leadership is a cardinal requirement of all who serve in the army of the Lord. A house divided against itself cannot stand (see Mark 3:25). Unity is basic and essential. Declared the Lord, "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27). Failure to sustain those in author-

ity is incompatible with service in the temple.

Obedying the laws of the land

Honesty with others, including obedience to constitutional law, is likewise a requirement.

"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (Articles of Faith 1:12).

Occasionally we receive letters from those who openly advocate opposition to the payment of taxes, complaining that their bishops and stake presidents will not give them temple recommends because of their activities. Through the years of the history of this work, there have been occasions when the Church and its members have come up against the law of the land. In such times, we have taken a stand in the courts. In those instances where the courts have ruled against us, although the ruling was difficult to bear, we have accepted it and conformed to it. Obedience to law, when that law has been declared constitutional, is incumbent upon the Latter-day Saints, and therefore becomes a standard of eligibility to enter the temples of the Church.

Our responsibilities to family

In that general context, may I say that we have taken the position that fathers who fail to provide court-mandated support for their children cannot expect the privileges of the House of the Lord. The scriptures are straightforward in their declarations concerning the responsibility of fathers with reference to their children. When divorce occurs and bitterness grows, as it usually does, some men will go to almost any end to escape provision for their care. Where such becomes a violation of that which has been ordered by a court of law, it becomes an act of contempt contrary to the doctrine and teaching of the Church.

The temple recommend which you carry, if honestly obtained, is certifica-

tion of your moral worthiness. It is inconceivable to think that a man who is a philanderer and unfaithful to his wife would consider himself eligible for the temple. It goes without saying that none such should be given a recommend.

But there is another, less obvious, group of whom I wish to speak. I have in my office a file of letters received from women who cry out over the treatment they receive from their husbands in their homes. They tell of the activity of some of these men in Church responsibilities. They even speak of men holding temple recommends. And they speak of abuse, both subtle and open. They tell of husbands who lose their tempers and shout at their wives and children. They tell of men who demand offensive intimate relations. They tell of men who demean them and put them down and of fathers who seem to know little of the meaning of patience and forbearance with reference to their children.

Brethren, when the bishop interviews you for your temple recommend, he is not likely to get into these delicate and sensitive and personal things. You must judge within your heart whether you are guilty of any practice that is unholy, impure, or in any way evil before the Lord.

A recommend certifies worthiness

What a unique and remarkable thing is a temple recommend. It is only a piece of paper with a name and signatures, but in reality it is a certificate that says the bearer is "honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous" and that he or she believes in doing good to all, that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy," he or she seeks after such (Articles of Faith 1:13).

Most important, and above all other qualifications, is the certain knowledge on the part of a recommend holder that God our Eternal Father lives, that Jesus Christ is the living Son of the living God, and that this is Their sacred and divine work.

Brethren, I believe that most who hold temple recommends meet all of the requirements. I regret to acknowledge, however, that there may be a few who do not and who should not enter the house of the Lord. I know it is difficult for a bishop to deny a recommend to someone who is in his ward and who may be on the borderline with reference to personal behavior. Such denial may be offensive to the applicant. But he or she should know that unless there is true worthiness, there will be no blessing gained, and condemnation will fall upon the head of him or her who unworthily crosses the threshold of the House of God.

Keep sacred things sacred

May I speak also of a matter pertinent to temples? I remind you of the absolute obligation to not discuss outside the temple that which occurs within the temple. Sacred matters deserve sacred consideration. We are under obligation, binding and serious, to not use temple language or speak of temple matters outside. I first went to the temple fifty-seven years ago. It was different from any other experience I had had in the Church. A young man of my association went about the same time. Thereafter, he was wont to use phrases from the language of the temple in a frivolous way. It was offensive. It was a betrayal of a sacred trust. I have watched him through the years. Once faithful, he has drifted from all Church activity and forsaken the faith of his fathers. I think that much of what has happened to him began with that small irreverential thing that he did in trivializing language which is not trivial.

Please, brethren, do not discuss outside of the temple that which occurs in the temple. While there, you are at liberty to do so. If you have questions, you

may speak with the temple president or one of his counselors. But when you leave the doors of the house of the Lord, be true to a sacred trust to speak not of that which is holy and sanctified.

Said the Lord, "Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit" (D&C 63:64). And again, "Trifle not with sacred things" (D&C 6:12).

In closing, I repeat that this recommend which I have and which so many of you have is a precious and wonderful thing. It makes one eligible for an exclusive and remarkable privilege—the privilege of entering that House which says on its wall, "Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord." Live worthy to serve in that house. Keep it holy. Do your part to keep from the Lord's house any unclean or defiling influence or person. Enjoy its beauty. Enjoy the wonder of the things that are spoken there, the beauty and the blessing of the ordinances there administered.

To young men who are here who have not yet been to the temple, may I suggest that you take advantage of the opportunity of being baptized in behalf of the dead. And then let that sacred experience become an anchor to your lives, that you so conduct yourselves at all times and in all circumstances that, at the proper time, you may secure a special and restricted credit card with the Lord, even a recommend to His holy house, there to enjoy all of its blessings and privileges. I so pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Beautiful Savior."

Elder Monte J. Brough offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 160th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 1, 1990. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "Awake and Arise" without announcement.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 160th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has asked that I conduct this meeting.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders David B. Haight, William R. Bradford, and Waldo P. Call

are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations that are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church who have assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ, opened these services by singing "Awake and Arise." They will now sing "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee," following which Elder John R. Lasater of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee."

Elder John R. Lasater offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

President Thomas S. Monson

The greatest of the kingdom

During the Galilean ministry of our Lord and Savior, the disciples came unto Him, saying:

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as

little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:1-6).

The many faces of child abuse

Recently, as I read the daily newspaper, my thoughts turned to this passage and the firm candor of the Savior's declaration. In one column of the newspaper I read of a custody battle between the mother and father of a child. Accusations were made, threats hurled, and anger displayed as parents moved here and there on the international scene with the child spirited away from one continent to another.

A second story told of a twelve-year-old lad who was beaten and set on fire because he refused a neighborhood bully's order to take drugs. Hospitalized, his condition remains critical.

Still a third report told of a father's sexual molestation of his small child.

These are *reported* cases of child abuse. There are many more never reported but equally as serious. A physician revealed to me the large number of children who are brought to the emergency rooms of local hospitals in your city and mine. In many cases guilty parents provide fanciful accounts of the child falling from his high chair or stumbling over a toy and striking his head. Altogether too frequently it is discovered that the parent was the abuser and the innocent child the victim. Shame on the perpetrators of such vile deeds. God will hold such strictly accountable for their actions.

Children are precious to the Lord

President Ezra Taft Benson is one who exemplifies a true love for these little ones. To see the tiny tots gather at his side, extend a small hand to be held in his or to kiss his cheek, is to see the love adults should have for these children. No one in the presence of President Benson refers to a child as a "kid." His correction for such a remark is sure and to the point. A visiting ambassador from another nation errantly made this slip. He was corrected with love.

When we realize just how precious children are, we will not find it difficult

to follow the pattern of the Master in our association with them. Not long ago, a sweet scene took place at the Salt Lake Temple. Children, who had been ever so tenderly cared for by faithful workers in the temple nursery, were now leaving in the arms of their mothers and fathers. One child turned to the lovely women who had been so kind to the children and, with a wave of her arm, spoke the feelings of her heart as she exclaimed, "Goodnight, angels."

The poet described a child so recently with its Heavenly Father as "a sweet new blossom of humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home to flower on earth."

Who among us has not praised God and marveled at His powers when an infant is held in one's arms? That tiny hand, so small yet so perfect, instantly becomes the topic of conversation. No one can resist placing his little finger in the clutching hand of an infant. A smile comes to the lips, a certain glow to the eyes, and one appreciates the tender feelings which prompted the poet to pen the lines:

Our birth is but a sleep and a
forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's
star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we
come
From God, who is our home.
[William Wordsworth, "Ode:
Intimations of Immortality from
Recollections of Early Childhood"]

When the disciples of Jesus attempted to restrain the children from approaching the Lord, He declared:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

"And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:14-16).

What a magnificent pattern for us to follow.

We can bless the lives of children

My heart burned warmly within me when the First Presidency approved the allocation of a substantial sum from your special fast-offering contributions to join with those funds from Rotary International that polio vaccine might be provided and the children living in Kenya immunized against this vicious crippler and killer of children.

I thank God for the work of our doctors who leave for a time their own private practices and journey to distant lands to minister to children. Cleft palates and other deformities which would leave a child impaired physically and damaged psychologically are skillfully repaired. Despair yields to hope. Gratitude replaces grief. These children can now look in the mirror and marvel at a miracle in their own lives.

In a recent meeting, I told of a dentist in my ward who each year visits the Philippine Islands to work his skills without compensation to provide corrective dentistry for children. Smiles are restored, spirits lifted, and futures enhanced. I did not know the daughter of this dentist was in the congregation to which I was speaking. At the conclusion of my remarks, she came forward and, with a broad smile of proper pride, said, "You have been speaking of my father. How I love him and what he is doing for children!"

In the faraway islands of the Pacific, hundreds who were near-blind now see because a missionary said to his physician brother-in-law, "Leave your wealthy clientele and the comforts of your palatial home and come to these special children of God who need your skills and need them now." The ophthalmologist responded without a backward glance. Today he comments quietly that this visit was the best service he ever rendered and

the peace which came to his heart the greatest blessing of his life.

Tears come easily to me when I read of a father who has donated one of his own kidneys in the hope that his son might have a more abundant life. I drop to my knees at night and add my prayer of faith in behalf of a mother in our community who journeyed to Chicago that she might provide part of her liver to her daughter in a delicate and potentially life-threatening surgery. She, who already had gone down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring forth this child into mortality, again put her hand in the hand of God and placed her own life in jeopardy for her child. Never a complaint, but ever a willing heart and a prayer of faith.

Elder Russell M. Nelson, upon returning from Romania, shared with us the pitiable plight of orphan children in that land—perhaps thirty thousand in the city of Bucharest alone. He visited one such orphanage and arranged that the Church might provide vaccine, medical dressings, and other urgently needed supplies. Certain couples will be identified and called to fill special missions to these children. I can think of no more Christ-like service than to hold a motherless child in one's arms or to take a fatherless boy by the hand.

We need not be called to missionary service, however, in order to bless the lives of children. Our opportunities are limitless. They are everywhere to be found—sometimes very close to home.

How children bless our lives

Last summer I received a letter from a woman who has emerged from a long period of Church inactivity. She is ever so anxious for her husband, who as yet is not a member of the Church, to share the joy she now feels.

She wrote of a trip which she, her husband, and their three sons made from the family home to Grandmother's home in Idaho. While driving through Salt Lake City, they were attracted by the message which appeared on a bill-

board. The message invited them to visit Temple Square. Bob, the nonmember husband, made the suggestion that a visit would be pleasant. The family entered the visitors' center, and Father took two sons up a ramp that one called "the ramp to heaven." Mother and three-year-old Tyler were a bit behind the others, they having paused to appreciate the beautiful paintings which adorned the walls. As they walked toward the magnificent sculpture of Thorvaldsen's *Christus*, tiny Tyler bolted from his mother and ran to the base of the *Christus*, while exclaiming, "It's Jesus! It's Jesus!" As Mother attempted to restrain her son, Tyler looked back toward her and his father and said, "Don't worry. He likes children."

After departing the center and again making their way along the freeway toward Grandmother's, Tyler moved to the front seat next to his father. Dad asked him what he liked best about their adventure on Temple Square. Tyler smiled up at him and said, "Jesus."

"How do you know that Jesus likes you, Tyler?"

Tyler, with a most serious expression on his face, looked up at his father's eyes and answered, "Dad, didn't you see his face?" Nothing else needed to be said.

As I read this account, I thought of the statement from the book of Isaiah: "And a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

The words of a Primary hymn express the feelings of a child's heart:

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,
Things I would ask him to tell me if he were here.
Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.
Oh, let me hear how the children stood round his knee.
I shall imagine his blessings resting on me;
Words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
All in the lovelight of Jesus' face.
["Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,"
Children's Songbook (1989), p. 57]

Blessing the Nephite children

I know of no more touching passage in scripture than the account of the Savior blessing the children, as recorded in 3 Nephi. The Master spoke movingly to the vast multitude of men, women, and children. Then, responding to their faith and the desire that He tarry longer, He invited them to bring to Him their lame, their blind, and their sick, that He might heal them. With joy they accepted His invitation. The record reveals that "he did heal them every one" (3 Nephi 17:9). There followed His mighty prayer to His Father. The multitude bore record: "The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father" (17:16).

Concluding this magnificent event, Jesus "wept, . . . and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . .

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven . . . ; and they came down and encircled those little ones . . . ; and the angels did minister unto them" (17:21, 23-24).

Over and over in my mind I pondered the phrase, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:15).

Thomas Michael Wilson

One who fulfilled in his life this admonition of the Savior was a missionary, Thomas Michael Wilson. He is the son of Willie and Julia Wilson, Route 2, Box 12, Lafayette, Alabama. Elder Wilson completed his earthly mission on January 13, 1990. When he was but a teenager, and he and his family were not yet members of the Church, he was stricken with cancer, followed by painful radiation therapy, and then blessed remission. This

illness caused his family to realize that not only is life precious but that it can also be short. The family began to look to religion to help them through this time of tribulation. Subsequently they were introduced to the Church and baptized. After accepting the gospel, young Brother Wilson yearned for the opportunity of being a missionary. A mission call came for him to serve in the Utah Salt Lake City Mission. What a privilege to represent the family and the Lord as a missionary!

Elder Wilson's missionary companions described his faith as like that of a child—unquestioning, undeviating, unyielding. He was an example to all. After eleven months, illness returned. Bone cancer now required the amputation of his arm and shoulder. Yet he persisted in his missionary labors.

Elder Wilson's courage and consuming desire to remain on his mission so touched his nonmember father that he investigated the teachings of the Church and also became a member.

An anonymous caller brought to my attention Elder Wilson's plight. She said she didn't want to leave her name and indicated she'd never before called a General Authority. However, she said, "You don't often meet someone of the caliber of Elder Wilson."

I learned that an investigator whom Elder Wilson had taught was baptized at the baptistry on Temple Square but then wanted to be confirmed by Elder Wilson, whom she respected so much. She, with a few others, journeyed to Elder Wilson's bedside in the hospital. There, with his remaining hand resting upon her head, Elder Wilson confirmed her a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder Wilson continued month after month his precious but painful service as a missionary. Blessings were given; prayers were offered. The spirit of his fellow missionaries soared. Their hearts were full. They lived closer to God.

Elder Wilson's physical condition deteriorated. The end drew near. He was to return home. He asked to serve but one additional month. What a month this

was! Like a child trusting implicitly its parents, Elder Wilson put his trust in God. He whom Thomas Michael Wilson silently trusted opened the windows of heaven and abundantly blessed him. His parents, Willie and Julia Wilson, and his brother Tony came to Salt Lake City to help their son and brother home to Alabama. However, there was yet a prayed-for, a yearned-for, blessing to be bestowed. The family invited me to come with them to the Jordan River Temple, where those sacred ordinances which bind families for eternity, as well as for time, were performed.

I said good-bye to the Wilson family. I can see Elder Wilson yet as he thanked me for being with him and his loved ones. He said, "It doesn't matter what happens to us in this life as long as we have the gospel of Jesus Christ and live it." What courage. What confidence. What love. The Wilson family made the long trek home to Lafayette, where Elder Thomas Michael Wilson slipped from here to eternity.

President Kevin K. Meadows, Elder Wilson's branch president, presided at the funeral services. The words of his subsequent letter to me I share with you today: "On the day of the funeral, I took the family aside and expressed to them, President Monson, the sentiments you sent to me. I reminded them of what Elder Wilson had told you that day in the temple, that it did not matter whether he taught the gospel on this or the other side of the veil, so long as he could teach the gospel. I gave to them the inspiration you provided from the writings of President Joseph F. Smith—that Elder Wilson had completed his earthly mission and that he, as all 'faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead' [D&C 138:57]. The spirit bore record that this was the case. Elder Thomas Michael Wilson was buried with his missionary name tag in place."

When Elder Wilson's mother and his father visit that rural cemetery and place flowers of remembrance on the grave of their son, I feel certain they will remember the day he was born, the pride they felt, and the genuine joy that was theirs. This tiny child they will remember became the mighty man who later brought to them the opportunity to achieve celestial glory. Perhaps on these pilgrimages, when emotions are close to the surface and tears cannot be restrained, they will again thank God for their missionary son, who never lost the faith of a child, and then ponder deep within their hearts the Master's words, "And a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

Peace will then be their blessing. It will be our blessing, also, as we remem-

ber and follow the Prince of Peace. That we may do so is my sincere prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee."

President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

President Howard W. Hunter

God requires personal commitment

As I think of the blessings God has given us and the many beauties of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I am aware that along the way we are asked to make certain contributions in return, contributions of time or of money or of other resources. These are all valued and all necessary, but they do not constitute our full offering to God. Ultimately, what our Father in Heaven will require of us is more than a contribution; it is a total commitment, a complete devotion, all that we are and all that we can be.

Please understand that I do not speak only of a commitment to the Church and its activities, although that always needs to be strengthened. No, I speak more specifically of a commitment that is shown in our individual behavior, in our personal integrity, in our loyalty to home and family and community, as well as to the Church. Of course, all of these loyalties are interrelated and closely linked because it is the teaching and example of the Lord Jesus Christ that shapes our behavior and forms our char-

acter in all areas of our life—personally, within the home, in our professions and community life, as well as in our devotion to the Church that bears his name.

The Lord is the standard

If we can pattern our life after the Master, and take his teachings and example as the supreme pattern for our own, we will not find it difficult to be consistent and loyal in every walk of life, for we will be committed to a single, sacred standard of conduct and belief. Whether at home or in the marketplace, whether at school or long after school is behind us, whether we are acting totally alone or in concert with a host of other people, our course will be clear and our standards will be obvious. We will have determined, as the Prophet Alma said, "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9).

This loyalty obviously includes support of the institutional church, but one of the purposes of that church is to alter

and improve the way we live every other aspect of our lives as well, wherever we are and in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, "even until death."

Let me recall briefly just one of those magnificent examples from scripture where three relatively young people stood by their principles and held to their integrity even though it seemed apparent that to do so would cost them their lives.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego

Approximately 586 years before Christ, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, marched against the city of Jerusalem and conquered it. So impressed was he with the qualities and learning of the children of Israel that he had several of them brought to the king's court.

Trouble came to the Israelites the day Nebuchadnezzar made a golden idol and commanded all in the province of Babylon to worship it, a command that the three young Israelites—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—quietly refused. The king was full of "rage and fury" and demanded that they be brought before him (Daniel 3:13). He informed them that if they did not fall down before the golden image at the appointed moment, "ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." Then with some self-satisfaction he asked, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (3:15).

The three young men responded courteously but without hesitation:

"If it be so," they said, "[that you threaten us with death,] our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

"But if not [if for whatever reason he chooses not to save us from the fire], be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (3:17-18).

Of course, Nebuchadnezzar was more furious than ever and ordered that one of the furnaces be heated to seven times its normal temperature. Then he

commanded that these three valiant young men be thrown fully clothed into the midst of the fire. Indeed, the king was so insistent and the flame so hot that the soldiers who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego fell dead from the heat of the furnace as they cast their captives forward.

Then transpired one of those great miracles to which the faithful are entitled according to the will of God. These three young men stood and walked about calmly in the midst of the furnace and were not burned. Indeed, when they were later called out of the furnace by the astonished king himself, their clothing was untarnished, their skin was free from any burn, not a hair of their head was singed. Not even the smell of smoke had come upon these courageous, committed young men.

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego," said the king, "who hath . . . delivered his servants that trusted in him, . . . [who] yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. . . .

"Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon" (Daniel 3:28, 30).

Living with integrity and faith

The ability to stand by one's principles, to live with integrity and faith according to one's belief—that is what matters, that is the difference between a contribution and a commitment. That devotion to true principle—in our individual lives, in our homes and families, and in all places where we meet and influence other people—that devotion is what God is ultimately requesting of us.

I recall some years ago our late and beloved colleague President Stephen L. Richards giving a university address entitled "Tried and Not Found Wanting." He spoke of people in our day, including young people in our day, who must be able to withstand the various tests of faithfulness and loyalty that life puts to all of us from time to time. None of his

examples was so dramatic as being cast into a fiery furnace, but the integrity involved was the same, and so was the need for commitment to high principle. He said:

"How do [we] feel about honor and integrity? What is [our] reaction to polite lying to facilitate easy social [relationships]? How much tolerance have [we] for either suppression or misrepresentation of facts to promote business advantage? Do [we] accept without compunction the old adage that all's fair in love and war and politics and college athletics? . . .

"How sacredly do [we] regard the good name of another? . . . [Do we pass on] spicy bits [of] entertaining conversation, . . . repeating rumors and stories which have not been submitted to the test [of truth]?" (*Where Is Wisdom?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], pp. 80-81).

President Kimball's example

In the same vein, President Spencer W. Kimball wrote:

"I may not be able to eliminate pornographic trash, but my family and I need not buy or view it.

"I may not be able to close disreputable businesses, but I can stay away from areas of questioned honor and ill repute.

"I may not be able to greatly reduce the divorces of the land or save all broken homes and frustrated children, but I can keep my own home a congenial one, my marriage happy, my home a heaven, and my children well-adjusted.

"I may not be able to stop the growing claims to freedom from laws based on morals, or change all opinions regarding looseness in sex and growing perversions, but I can guarantee devotion to all high ideals and standards in my own home, and I can work toward giving my own family a happy, interdependent, spiritual life.

"I may not be able to stop all graft and dishonesty in high places, but I myself can be honest and upright, full of integrity and true honor" (*Faith Precedes*

the Miracle [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 247).

These are some of the routine but crucial tests of our day in which we must be willing to stand true and with integrity and honor. Indeed, even in polite social situations we must be willing "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9).

Commitment to home and family

Please permit me to close by stressing one place in society where that strength and commitment must be shown if we are to survive as a nation, as a people, or even as a fully successful church. We simply must have love and integrity and strong principles in our homes. We must have an abiding commitment to marriage and children and morality. We must succeed where success counts most for the next generation.

Surely that home is strongest and most beautiful in which we find each person sensitive to the feelings of others, striving to serve others, striving to live at home the principles we demonstrate in more public settings. We need to try harder to live the gospel in our family circles. Our homes deserve our most faithful commitments. A child has the right to feel that in his home he is safe, that there he has a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need. A child needs parents who are happy in their relationship to each other, who are working happily toward the fulfillment of ideal family living, who love their children with a sincere and unselfish love, and who are committed to the family's success.

President N. Eldon Tanner said: "Just imagine the reversal that would take place if full integrity were to rule in family life. There would be complete fidelity. Husbands would be faithful to wives, and wives to husbands. There would be no living in adulterous relationships in lieu of marriage. Homes would

abound in love, children and parents would have respect for one another. . . . [How else will our children come to] value honesty and integrity?" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, p. 20; or *Ensign*, May 1977, p. 16).

A successful life, the good life, the righteous Christian life requires something more than a contribution, though every contribution is valuable. Ultimately it requires commitment—whole souled, deeply held, eternally cherished commitment to the principles we know to be true in the commandments God has given. We need such loyalty to the Church, but that must immediately be interpreted as a loyalty in our personal habits and behavior, integrity in the wider community and marketplace, and—for the future's sake—devotion and character in our marriages and homes and families.

If we will be true and faithful to our principles, committed to a life of honesty and integrity, then no king or contest or fiery furnace will be able to compromise us. For the success of the kingdom of God on earth, may we stand as witnesses for him "at all times and in all things,

and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just heard from President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, in whose recovery we have witnessed a remarkable and wonderful miracle. The Tabernacle Choir then sang "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder Carlos E. Asay

A giant leap for mankind

I pray for the influence of the Holy Spirit as I discuss with you a most sacred subject—a subject that I hope will have special significance to those of you who may be investigating the Church. On July 20, 1969, astronauts landed on the moon, a planet located some 239,000 miles from the earth. Millions of people the world over witnessed this historic event on television and stared in amazement as the lunar module came to rest on the moon's surface. All were thrilled when Neil Armstrong exited the spacecraft and announced: "One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

The press coverage of this monumental achievement was broad. It occupied headlines and was the subject of feature stories for many days. After all, the moon landing had opened new fron-

tiers of space travel, revealed new knowledge about the universe, and represented a major investment of human resources. Some reporters declared that the moon landing was the greatest event in the history of mankind since the resurrection of Christ.

I do stand in awe of the recent developments in space technology. My mind does not comprehend even a fraction of the miracles wrought by knowledgeable men of the world who have probed the universe. However, I take issue with those who believe that the placement of men upon the moon is the greatest occurrence of the last two thousand years. I do so because I know of an event wherein the Creator of the universe himself came to earth in answer to an obscure boy's humble prayer and revealed pure theology.

What constitutes greatness

Greatness is measured by men in many ways. It is generally equated with size, cost, quantity, and position. God, however, has a better way: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are [His] ways higher than [man's] ways" (Isaiah 55:9). In God's eyes, greatness is equated with light, truth, goodness, and service (see D&C 93:36; Matthew 23:11).

We are taught that eternal life is "the *greatest* of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7; italics added), and that eternal life is to know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [he has] sent" (John 17:3). Therefore, it is concluded that anyone who would introduce the only true God to mankind and unwrap the gift of eternal life, making it available to all, would be a partaker of greatness and be associated with great events.

The simplicity of Joseph Smith

The obscure young man of whom I speak, who introduced the true and living God to a benighted world, was not sponsored by an organization or trained by a group of professionals. At the time, he was no prophet, nor was he a prophet's son. But like many who have been called in times past to perform a holy work, he was a common farm boy (see Amos 7:14-16).

He was the product of a God-fearing family—a family that thirsted after righteousness and exercised a simple but deep faith in the Lord. His school was the home, his teachers were loving parents, and his textbook was the Holy Bible. Yet, at the tender age of fourteen, he demonstrated a type of faith which had power to thrust him into the presence of Deity (see Mark 9:23).

There were no cameras trained upon him when he stepped into that grove of trees in upper New York state. There were no cheering throngs or support personnel to provide him encouragement. Nor were there newspaper reporters on hand to describe his actions. He knelt

alone under the gaze of his Heavenly Father and offered up the sincere desires of his heart with perfect confidence that his voice would be heard. He was unaware of the muted applause of unseen multitudes who had waited so patiently for the dawning of a new day and the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

His investment in working the miracle was not money, machines, manpower, or even the trappings of science; his was an investment of living faith and an indomitable will.

Joseph Smith's prayer and first vision in 1820 were no small things, even though they began as "one small step for a [young] man." Over the years they have proven to be "one giant leap for mankind"; for that act of supreme faith ended a long night of spiritual darkness, opened up a flood of unadulterated truths, and ushered in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

The truths of the First Vision

We are told that the spin-off effects of the moon mission were many. Such benefits are reflected in all the materials about us. However, the consequences of Joseph Smith's first vocal prayer and his probe into the unknown are infinitely greater and should be pondered seriously by all who are interested in "things as they *really* are, and of things as they *really* will be" (Jacob 4:13; italics added).

Joseph did not emerge from the grove with lunar rocks in his pocket or with moon dust on his shoes. He emerged with a changed countenance and with a gold mine of truth lodged in his mind and heart:

1. Joseph learned that there are no winners in wars of words or tumults of opinion regarding religious matters (see Joseph Smith—History 1:12). Such contention plays into the hands of Satan because he is the "father of contention" (3 Nephi 11:29).

Moreover, Joseph verified the fact that critical issues pertaining to the Spirit cannot be settled alone by "an appeal to the Bible" so long as teachers of religion

understand the same passage of scripture so differently (see Joseph Smith—History 1:12).

2. Joseph learned of “the power of some actual being from the unseen world” which bound his tongue and enveloped him in thick darkness as he began to pray (see 1:16). This power was exerted by the evil one, who viewed Joseph Smith as a threat to his realm of sin and error.

Few men have disturbed and annoyed the adversary more than Joseph; few have felt the combined powers of darkness more than he; and few have triumphed over Satan more nobly (see 1:20).

3. Joseph learned what Moses had learned years before about Satan’s darkness and nothingness, as compared with the light and liberty associated with God (see Moses 1:10–15). Said Joseph:

“I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound” (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

“Light and truth [do] forsake [the] evil one” (D&C 93:37). The powers of darkness do flee before the powers of light, just as the night runs from the dawn.

4. Joseph learned that he was made in the image of God, exactly as the scriptures attest. In his own words:

“When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

In a matter of only a few moments, the damning myth of an impersonal, uncaring, and incomprehensible God was dispelled. The true nature of a Father in Heaven—the father of our spirits—was revealed in company with his Beloved

Son, even Jesus Christ, he who had atoned for the sins of man (see Hebrews 12:9).

As stated by an Apostle: “One minute’s instruction from personages clothed with the glory of God coming down from the eternal worlds is worth more than all the volumes that ever were written by uninspired men” (Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 12:354).

5. Joseph learned that none of the churches of the day was right and that he should not join any of them. He recounts:

“My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right . . . and which I should join.

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong” (Joseph Smith—History 1:18–19).

This pronouncement may have troubled Joseph at first because members of his family had affiliated with a specific faith and he, himself, had leanings toward another. But God had spoken, and who was he to dispute?

6. Joseph learned why he must not align himself with an existing church. His words are:

“The Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof’” (1:19).

Having seen what he had seen and having heard what he had heard, how could he possibly join a sect unacceptable to the Almighty? Perhaps some of the professors were “humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they [were] led, that in many instances they [did] err because they [were] taught by the precepts of men” (2 Nephi 28:14).

Perhaps some honest efforts were being made by a few, but whatever was being done was insufficient "to teach any man the right way" (2 Nephi 25:28-29).

7. Joseph learned that "the testimony of James [was] true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided" (Joseph Smith—History 1:26).

He also learned that a soul in the early nineteenth century was just as precious unto God as a soul in Moses' time or in the meridian of time, else why would the Lord appear? (see Alma 39:17).

8. Soon thereafter, Joseph learned "that God had a work for [him] to do" and that his name should be made known among all nations, kindreds, and tongues (see Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

Such prophecy has been fulfilled as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been established and as the fulness of the gospel has been preached in all the world.

Yes, it all started so quietly, so simply, and so very wonderfully. A believing boy took "one small step" and prayed. A loving Father in Heaven listened and responded. What has resulted is rightfully referred to as "one giant leap for mankind."

The importance of the First Vision

All the towers ever built and all the spaceships ever launched pale in comparison with Joseph Smith's first vision. Though men fly higher and higher into the heavens, they will not find God or see his face unless they humble themselves, pray, and heed the truths revealed through the Prophet of the Restoration.

Some have foolishly said, "Take away Joseph Smith and his prayer in the grove and the First Vision and we can accept your message." Such people

would have us bury the treasure of saving truths already cited, and many more, and turn our backs to "the most important event that had taken place in all world history from the day of Christ's ministry to the glorious hour when it occurred" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 285).

Joseph Smith "lived great" and "died great in the eyes of God" (D&C 135:3). He "has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (135:3).

His prayer was—

One small step for a [young] man,
[but]
one giant leap for mankind.
[It proved that]
There isn't a thing that man cannot
do,
[if he has faith, trusts in the Lord,
and]
If he takes one small step at a time.
[Art Harris, "One Small Step"]

Yes, "praise to the man who communed with Jehovah" (*Hymns*, no. 27) and who was instrumental in translating the Book of Mormon, restoring the holy priesthood, organizing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and revealing the fulness of the gospel.

I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet, for the fruits of his labors are sweet and abiding, and the Holy Spirit has borne witness to my soul. I feel honored to blend my voice with the chorus of millions who testify of his greatness and divine calling. I also know that "the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls" (Alma 37:7). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

When I was a boy, I liked to hear about King Arthur. In the story of King Arthur, Queen Guinevere gives this advice to Lancelot, the bravest of the Knights of the Round Table: "For I would not have you declare yourself to the world until you have proved your worthiness. Wherefore do not yourself proclaim your name, but wait until the world proclaimeth it."

Let the world see our good works

How much more effective it is in our day also to let the world see our good works rather than hear us dwell on our own accomplishments or point out impressive achievements.

We should remember to avoid the damaging effects that can come when we appear to be boasting about increased numbers or growth. How much better it is to let others measure our achievements rather than misunderstand as we recite on a continuing basis our percentages, progress, or family performances.

Boasting is to glorify oneself, to talk in a vain or bragging manner, or to talk especially about one's deeds. Boasting is to speak with pride and to take pride in, to brag about, to be proud to possess.

Oftentimes, boastful people are starving for attention. Boastful people may not be aware of the consequences caused by their method of presentation.

Ammon boasts of God

Ammon gives us excellent guidelines for putting our success in proper perspective.

"And it came to pass that when Ammon had said these words, his brother Aaron rebuked him, saying: Ammon, I

fear that thy joy doth carry thee away unto boasting.

"But Ammon said unto him: I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God.

"Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever" (Alma 26:10-12).

In our conversations and conduct we can be much more effective if we avoid the demeaning effect of that which could be classified as boasting. We should wisely let others become aware of accomplishments by observations rather than to have us appear to flaunt them before the world. Boasting diminishes credibility and too often alienates friends, co-workers, family members, and even those who may observe us from a distance.

Grateful but not proud

We are humbly grateful for the increased number of conversions, for the many missionaries in the field, and for the evidence of improved commitments to and in the Church.

We recall the response of one of our prophets, Spencer W. Kimball, years ago when he was told of the great numbers of missionaries serving in the field. He said, "I am thankful, but not impressed." Gratitude was expressed, but he urged Church members to refrain from basking in their glory and to move on to higher levels and new horizons.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, to whose Church we belong, would be disap-

pointed if we ever created the impression that the efforts and the hard work put forth to build his kingdom were based only on the wisdom and power of man.

Success comes through the Lord

Recently during a special women's conference, a speaker told about how he'd been quite successful in land development and how everything he'd touched had turned to gold. He'd also tried to live a faithful life and had been a very active servant in the gospel. Then he'd been called as a mission president. He had apparently been a very effective mission president and had subsequently returned to his home state. Throughout his life he'd experienced one success after another—he was a recognized leader in his community, had built a prosperous business. Being called as a mission president had sort of cemented in his mind that he'd "made it"—that he was an all-around success.

When he returned from his mission, a combination of changing interest rates and other business factors caused his once-prosperous business to plummet. In fact, he'd lost nearly everything. Telling the story, this man said, "I realized that I'd become quite boastful—that while I felt I had a testimony of Jesus Christ, in my mind I had brought about all of these wonderful things through my hard work, intelligence, and so forth. But when hard times hit, I began to realize how offensive I must have been to others and to my Heavenly Father to assume that I had brought all of these good things on my own. I felt like I'd lived a life of arrogance and boasting."

Helaman's advice to his sons, Nephi and Lehi, can give us strength today:

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good. . . .

"And now my sons, behold I have somewhat more to desire of you, which desire is, that ye may not do these things that ye may boast, but that ye may do these things to lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal" (Helaman 5:7-8).

Helaman wanted his sons to do good for the right reasons—not to boast, but to lay up treasures in heaven.

"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" is counsel often stated (Matthew 6:3). This is especially true when we have had the opportunity to comfort, console, or counsel any fellowmen who are confused, troubled, or weary. Whatever success we might have had as we have tried to help should usually not be discussed, let alone boasted about. Humble, quiet, compassionate service is so soul-rewarding; who would need to point out the subject or location of kindly deeds?

"For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him" (D&C 3:4).

How easy it is for man to believe that temporal success has been achieved by his own skills and labor. Everything good comes from the Lord.

Consideration for others

Consideration for the feelings of others should always be important to worthy Latter-day Saints. Rightfully we may be happy about the number of children with which we have been blessed, the missionaries who have served, the temple marriages of our offspring, and the accomplishments of family members; but others who are not so fortunate may have feelings of guilt or inadequacy. They may have been praying long and hard for the same blessings about which we are boasting. These people may feel that they are out of favor with God.

For this reason our appreciation should be sincerely felt and gratitude expressed frequently to our Father in Heaven—but not too vocally to the world.

May we all be gratefully aware of the source of our blessings and strengths

and refrain from taking undue credit for personal accomplishments.

Oftentimes when we dwell on where we have been and where we are now, and what we have now spiritually or financially, we can create resentment rather than respect.

Boasting, whether it be done innocently or otherwise, is not good. Too frequently it creates an impression of more interest in self than in others.

We never accomplish things alone

It has been my experience over the years as a participant in team athletics that the star performer who boasts of his achievements and records asks for trouble. Those who have records that continue to impress are those who point out and who truly acknowledge the strengths of teammates, coaches, and managers and thank God himself for extra talents and abilities.

Opponents in athletic competitions seem to lie in wait to clobber those who boast in their own strength. Unusual satisfaction must have been David's when he was able to slay Goliath, a boastful, defiant giant.

It pleases God to have us humbly recognize his powers and his influence in our accomplishments rather than to indicate by words or innuendo that we have been responsible for remarkable achievements.

We learn from James 3:5 that often "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things." No thinking Latter-day Saint will permit his comments, attitudes, or expressions to be construed as boasting in his own strength. Those who persist in boasting fail to recognize the true source of personal achievement.

Humility should be our foundation

History teaches us that those who boast in their own strength cannot have lasting success. Constantly we should be reminded that we must not boast of faith nor of mighty works but instead should boast of God in his blessings and goodness to us. God will help us to under-

stand that humility must be our foundation if the goodness of the Lord is to continue to come to and from us. The boasting man will certainly fall, because in his own strength no man endures. The boasting or conceited person in life is not expected by his peers to achieve great heights because he conveys an attitude he is already there.

One of the most common of all sins among worldly people is relying on and then boasting in the arm of flesh. This is a most serious evil. It is a sin born of pride, a sin that creates a frame of mind which keeps men from turning to the Lord and accepting his saving grace. When a man knowingly or unknowingly engages in self-exultation because of his riches, his political power, his worldly learning, his physical prowess, his business ability, or even his works of righteousness, he is not in tune with the Spirit of the Lord.

We would all do well to take a lesson from the Savior, who repeatedly acknowledged and gave credit to the Father in all things. Indeed, that precedent was set in the premortal council when Jesus Christ pledged the fruits of all he might himself accomplish to go to the Father: "And the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2).

"Tell no man"

During his mortal ministry, Jesus raised Jairus's daughter to life. "And her parents were astonished," Luke says, as well they should have been, "but he charged them that they should tell no man" (Luke 8:56). Mark's account says, "He charged them straitly that no man should know it" (Mark 5:43).

This wondrous deed that turned death into life, that bore record of the divinity of the One who even now was forecasting his own future victory over the grave, that could be performed only in righteousness and only by the power of God—this mighty miracle should, as Matthew says, send His fame into all the land on its own merits (see Matthew 4:24).

Indeed, the parents could not enshroud in secrecy that which was already public knowledge; everyone in the whole area would soon know, because of the way Jesus himself had handled the successive events, that the little maid who once was dead now lived. Her death had been announced openly to the multitude. Jesus himself had replied before the multitude that, notwithstanding her death, she would "be made whole" (Luke 8:50). All the people would soon know that she now lived and could only be expected to wonder how and by what means life had come to her again.

The parents were charged to tell no man, but instead left the telling of this wondrous event to outsiders who were aware of the miracle. We as a matter of standard gospel counsel encourage that those who enjoy the gifts of the Spirit and who possess the signs which always follow those who believe are commanded not to boast of these spiritual blessings. In our day, after naming the miraculous signs that always attend those who have faith and those who believe the very truth taught by Jesus anciently, the Lord has said:

"But a commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation" (D&C 84:73).

Perhaps the charge to "tell no man" meant they were not to tell the account in a boastful way, lest a spirit of pride—a spirit of self-adopted superiority—should come into their souls. There were times when Jesus told the recipients of his healing power to go forth and testify of the goodness of God unto them, and other times when he limited the extent and detail of their witness.

Everything comes from God

The many admonitions in the scriptures to avoid boasting send the message that we should realize the source of all our blessings.

Everything is given by God. All talent, creativity, ability, insight, and strength comes from him. In our own strength we can do nothing, as Ammon admitted to his brother (see Alma 26:10–12). When we seek the praise of man more than the praise of God, it will become easy to fall.

Boasting will be erased when we seek the Lord's help and thank him for all we have and are.

God help us to humbly accept his blessings of strength and guidance. The wise and committed will praise his name forever and will avoid the very appearance of any attitudes or situations that feature personal accomplishments or boasting.

I leave you my special witness of the truthfulness of this great work. All of us can more effectively share our knowledge and testimonies if we boast not. This I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.

Following my remarks the Tabernacle Choir will conclude this session by singing "God's Daily Care."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Lloyd P. George of the Seventy, and this conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, I sense the awesome burden of speaking to you in this great conference. Tens of thousands of you are listening with great expecta-

tion here in the Tabernacle, or in your homes, or in more than two thousand church buildings. May I say at the outset that I love you as my brethren and sisters

of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love you for your faith and faithfulness. I love you for the integrity of your lives. I love you for your desire to live as the Lord would have you live and for the effort you are making to do so.

We all need mercy

I know that many of you carry very heavy burdens. I know that many of you live under extreme stress. I know that you are anxious to do the right thing and that you are prayerfully trying to do so. I know also that none of us has reached that perfection we have been admonished to seek, and therefore, with only a desire to give encouragement, I take the liberty of using a text that I feel has application for each of us. It is from the sermon which Jesus gave to the multitude who gathered on the mount: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

We live in a world where there is so much of harshness. We live in a world filled with hostility and meanness. By reason of our human natures, so many seem prone to act with unmitigated selfishness regardless of injury to others.

I spoke one day with a young mother, a single parent who had been abandoned by her husband. With only meager skills, she was trying to make a living for her children. Broken and discouraged, she said, with tears in her eyes, "It's a rough world out there. It's a jungle without mercy."

How godlike a quality is mercy. It cannot be legislated. It must come from the heart. It must be stirred up from within. It is part of the endowment each of us receives as a son or daughter of God and partaker of a divine birthright. I plead for an effort among all of us to give greater expression and wider latitude to this instinct which lies within us. I am convinced that there comes a time, possibly many times, within our lives when we might cry out for mercy on the part of others. How can we expect it unless we have been merciful ourselves?

Rich men and the oppressed

A parable of the Master comes to mind:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: . . .

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

"And in hell he lift[ed] up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot" (Luke 16:19-26).

I plead for a stronger spirit of compassion in all of our relationships, a stronger element of mercy, for the promise is sure that if we are merciful we shall obtain mercy.

Along with you I have observed in recent months a wondrous, almost unbelievable, change in some of the nations of the earth. Dictators have fallen, and the voices of the people are heard again with a new song of freedom.

I watched on television the summary trial given one who had been a merciless despot. Now in the moment of his extremity he wished for mercy on the part of his accusers. I know nothing of the court system under which he and his wife were tried. I know only that the hearing

was short, the judgment death, and the execution quick and final. There had been no mercy shown through long years of oppression, harsh and unrelenting; and now in this hour of bitter culmination none was extended.

Examples and teachings about mercy

Mercy is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The degree to which each of us is able to extend it becomes an expression of the reality of our discipleship under Him who is our Lord and Master.

I remind you that it was He who said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

It was He who said, "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also" (5:40).

It was He who said, "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (5:41).

It was He who said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (5:42).

It was He who said to the woman taken in sin:

"Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? . . .

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

It was He who, while hanging on the cross in dreadful agony, cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He, the Son of the everlasting Father, was the epitome of mercy. His ministry was one of compassion toward the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the victims of injustice and man's inhumanity to man. His sacrifice on the cross was an unparalleled act of mercy in behalf of all humanity.

How great a thing is mercy. Most often it is quiet and unassuming. It receives few headlines. It is the antithesis of vengeance and hatred, of greed and

offensive egotism. As Portia says in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*:

The quality of mercy is not
strain'd,—

It droppeth as the gentle rain from
heaven

Upon the place beneath: it is twice
blest,—

It blesseth him that gives, and him
that takes:

. . . it becomes

The throned monarch better than his
crown;

His sceptre shows the force of
temporal power, . . .

But mercy is above the sceptred
sway,—

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself.

[Act 4, scene 1, lines 184-95]

Ending wars with mercy

If cultivated among all men, it would put an end to the atrocities of war. For all too many years now we have watched the conflict that has gone on in Northern Ireland. Surely those who have been closest to it and most affected by it must be weary of it. An outpouring of mercy on both sides would overcome the corrosive hatred that has existed and festered for so long. It is time for each side to act with greater compassion toward the other. I am confident that as surely as this happens, those who are merciful will find the mercy for which they hunger.

Of all the wars that have afflicted the United States, none was so costly in suffering and death, none so filled with venom and hatred as was the American Civil War. There are few more touching scenes in history than that of April 9, 1865, at Appomattox, Virginia, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant. General Grant wrote a brief statement of terms under which the soldiers of the South were free to return to their homes with their personal side arms, their private horses, and baggage.

There was no recrimination, no demand for reparations, no apologies re-

quired or punishment given. This has gone down in the chronicles of war as a great and magnificent act of mercy.

Society benefits from mercy

In the story of our own people there stands out the example of Brigham Young's attitude toward the Indians. His declaration that it was "better to feed them than to fight them" evidenced not only the innate mercy of his nature, but the greater wisdom inherent in a compassionate attitude toward the less fortunate.

If I may be pardoned a personal indulgence, I find expression of this attitude in the chronicles of my own family. My grandfather, Ira Nathaniel Hinckley, was called in 1867 by Brigham Young to build a fort at Cove Creek on the road to southern Utah so that travelers might be afforded protection from the Indians. But there was never Indian trouble of any consequence because of the policy of merciful treatment toward them which was followed during the years by my grandfather when he operated that lonely outpost.

There is so much of civil strife and conflict in our society that could be ameliorated by a small touch of mercy. Much of it has reached a point where the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been enlarged to require three eyes for one eye and three teeth for one tooth. Many victims, badgered and broken, cry in vain for a touch of kindness.

We see labor strife fraught with violence and untamed accusations. Were there a greater willingness on the part of each side to look with some element of mercy on the problems of the other, most of this could be avoided.

We have recently been reminded that in this land there still persists, notwithstanding the protection of the law, a merciless exploitation of children in certain industries.

And there are still those, not a few, who without compassion "grind the faces of the poor" (Isaiah 3:15).

Show more kindness to others

Our generation is afflicted with critics in the media who think they do a great and clever thing in mercilessly attacking men and women in public office and in other positions of leadership. They are prone to take a line or a paragraph out of context and pursue their prey like a swarm of killer bees. They lash out with invective and snide innuendo against those who have no effective way of fighting back or who, in the spirit of the teachings of the Master, prefer to turn the other cheek and go forward with their lives.

In many areas of the world, governments are waging a battle against illegal drugs. I do not speak negatively of the efforts of enforcement officers to curb the pernicious drug traffic. But along with this there is need for compassion toward many of the victims of drugs. Whenever we help one to find a better way, our effort becomes an act of mercy with a grateful response rather than an act of punishment followed by resentment.

The plight of the homeless is a repudiation of the greatness of our nation. I commend most warmly those who with a compelling spirit of kindness reach out to those in distress, regardless of whom they might be, to help and assist, to feed and provide for, to nurture and to bless. As these extend mercy, I am confident that the God of heaven will bless them, and their posterity after them, with His own mercy. I am satisfied that these who impart so generously will not lack in their own store, but that there will be food on their tables and a roof over their heads. One cannot be merciful to others without receiving a harvest of mercy in return.

Let mercy be taught in our homes

And this brings me to another area where there is so great a need for that mercy which speaks of forbearance, kindness, clemency, compassion. I speak of the homes of the people.

Every child, with few possible exceptions, is the product of a home, be it good, bad, or indifferent. As children grow through the years, their lives, in large measure, become an extension and a reflection of family teaching. If there is harshness, abuse, uncontrolled anger, disloyalty, the fruits will be certain and discernible, and in all likelihood they will be repeated in the generation that follows. If, on the other hand, there is forbearance, forgiveness, respect, consideration, kindness, mercy, and compassion, the fruits again will be discernible, and they will be eternally rewarding. They will be positive and sweet and wonderful. And as mercy is given and taught by parents, it will be repeated in the lives and actions of the next generation.

I speak to fathers and mothers everywhere with a plea to put harshness behind us, to bridle our anger, to lower our voices, and to deal with mercy and love and respect one toward another in our homes.

Our responsibility is to others

As Elder James E. Talmage once wrote: "Religion without morality, professions of godliness without charity, church-membership without adequate responsibility as to individual conduct in daily life, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. . . . 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Honesty of purpose, integrity of soul, individual purity, [absolute] freedom of conscience, willingness to do good to all men even enemies, pure benevolence—these are some of the fruits by which the religion of Christ may be known, far exceeding in importance and value the promulgation of dogmas and the enunciation of theories" (*Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 429).

In that same vein the Lord in modern revelation has enjoined us, "Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang

down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

And again, "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

We in the United States have heard much in recent months about a "kinder, gentler nation."

If there is to be such it must come of the spontaneous expression of millions of kinder, gentler human hearts.

Let us be more merciful. Let us get the arrogance out of our lives, the conceit, the egotism. Let us be more compassionate, gentler, filled with forbearance and patience and a greater measure of respect one for another. In so doing, our very example will cause others to be more merciful, and we shall have greater claim upon the mercy of God who in His love will be generous toward us.

"For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? . . .

"And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, . . . O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another" (Mosiah 4:19, 21).

Those who show mercy obtain mercy

So spoke King Benjamin. To which I add that the power of the Master is certain and His word is sure. He will keep His promise toward those who are compassionate. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

I am confident that a time will come for each of us when, whether because of sickness or infirmity, of poverty or distress, of oppressive measures against us by man or nature, we shall wish for mercy. And if, through our lives, we have granted mercy to others, we shall obtain it for ourselves.

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am *merciful* and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory" (D&C 76:5-6; italics added).

Of these things I bear witness as I testify that God our Eternal Father lives, that He is a God of mercy, that His Son

gave His life in a great merciful atonement for each of us, and that we shall be the beneficiaries of that mercy as we extend it to others, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "God's Daily Care."
Elder Lloyd P. George offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 160th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 1, 1990. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 160th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Russell M. Nelson and Vaughn J. Featherstone and Bishop Glenn L. Pace are seated on the stand.

We send also our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and

many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and accompanied by Robert Cundick, will begin this service by singing "Great Is the Lord."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Glen L. Rudd of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Great Is the Lord."
Elder Glen L. Rudd offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Following the singing, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Some years ago, an acquaintance of mine who was moving to Washington, D.C., went to the district offices to take

the driver's license examination. He had to fill out a form that asked for his business address and his occupation. He had

just been appointed a justice of the United States Supreme Court, so he used that as his business address. In the blank marked "occupation" he wrote the word *justice*. The person at the counter examined this answer, frowned, and said, "Justice? Justice! Well, I guess that's all right. Last week a fellow wrote *peace*."

The occupation of peace

Each of us should pursue the occupation of "peace." But what is peace, and how do we seek it?

Many think of peace as the absence of war. Everyone wants that kind of peace. Songs celebrate it, and bumper stickers proclaim it.

Many good people promote peace by opposing war. They advocate laws or treaties to abolish war, to require disarmament, or to reduce armed forces.

Those methods may reduce the likelihood or the costs of war. But opposition to war cannot ensure peace, because peace is more than the absence of war.

For over fifty years, I have heard the leaders of this church preach that peace can only come through the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am coming to understand why.

Peace is the opposite of war

The peace the gospel brings is not just the *absence* of war. It is the *opposite* of war. Gospel peace is the opposite of any conflict, armed or unarmed. It is the opposite of national or ethnic hostilities, of civil or family strife.

In the midst of World War I, President Joseph F. Smith declared:

"For years it has been held that peace comes only by preparation for war; the present conflict should prove that peace comes only by preparing for peace, through training the people in righteousness and justice, and selecting rulers who respect the righteous will of the people. . . .

"There is only one thing that can bring peace into the world. It is the adoption of the gospel of Jesus Christ, rightly

understood, obeyed and practiced by rulers and people alike" (*Improvement Era*, Sept. 1914, pp. 1074-75).

A generation later, during the savage hostilities of World War II, President David O. McKay declared:

"*Peace will come and be maintained only through the triumph of the principles of peace, and by the consequent subjection of the enemies of peace, which are hatred, envy, ill-gotten gain, the exercise of unrighteous dominion of men. Yielding to these evils brings misery to the individual, unhappiness to the home, war among nations*" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953], p. 280).

Peace comes from the Lord

Such has been the message of the prophets in all ages. Referring to the first families of the earth, Moses wrote, "And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed" (Moses 6:15).

In his own day, Moses gave the Lord's promise to the children of Israel: "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, . . . I will give peace in the land, . . . neither shall the sword go through your land" (Leviticus 26:3, 6).

Throughout the Book of Mormon, the Lord declares, "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land" (2 Nephi 1:20).

War is rooted in wickedness

As we seek to understand the causes of wars, persecutions, and civil strife, we can see that they are almost always rooted in wickedness.

The mass-murders of the twentieth century are among the bloodiest crimes ever committed against humanity. We can hardly comprehend the magnitude of the Nazi holocaust murders of over five million Jews in Europe, Stalin's purges and labor camps that killed five to ten million in the Soviet Union, and the two to three million noncombatants who were

killed or who died of hunger in the Biafran War (see Isidor Walliman and Michael N. Dobkowski, eds., *Genocide and the Modern Age* [New York: Greenwood Press, 1987], p. 46; *The Nation*, 6 Mar. 1989, p. 294; 7/14 Aug. 1989, p. 154).

All of these slaughters, and others like them, were rooted in the ancient wickedness Satan taught—that a man could murder to get gain (see Moses 5:30–31). The mass-murderers of this century killed to acquire property and to secure power over others.

Through the prophet Moses, the Lord God of Israel commanded:

“Thou shalt not kill.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“Thou shalt not steal.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . .

“Thou shalt not covet” (Exodus 20:13–17).

Obedience to these commandments, which are the bedrock moral foundation for all Christians and Jews, would have prevented the greatest tragedies of this century.

“All are alike unto God”

We still live in a time of turmoil. There are wars between some nations, armed conflicts within others, and violent controversies in most. People are killed every day in some places, and hatred is practiced in many more. Peace is a victim everywhere.

If only we could heed the call of the Lord God of Israel, “Come unto me all ye ends of the earth” (2 Nephi 26:25). As the Book of Mormon teaches, he has created all flesh, “and the one being is as precious in his sight as the other” (Jacob 2:21). He has given salvation “free for all men” (2 Nephi 26:27), and “all men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden” (26:28).

“And he inviteth [all men] to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen;

and all are alike unto God” (2 Nephi 26:33).

The blessings of the gospel are universal, and so is the formula for peace: keep the commandments of God. War and conflict are the result of wickedness; peace is the product of righteousness.

We are still far from peace

During the past year we have seen revolutionary changes in the governments of many nations. We are gratified that in most nations these changes have been accomplished without war or bloodshed. Nevertheless, we are far from securing peace in these nations or in any others throughout the world.

Many take comfort from the Old Testament prophecy that nations will “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks” (Micah 4:3). But this prophecy only applies to that time of peace which follows the time when the God of Jacob “will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (4:2).

For now, we have wars and conflicts, and everywhere they are rooted in violations of the commandments of God.

The leaders of some nations have systematically murdered their opposition.

Persons in power in some nations have stolen public and private property so they could live in luxury. At the same time, they have neglected the most basic needs of the hungry and homeless among their people.

Some private citizens have promoted poverty by stealing, by corrupting public officials, and by oppressing the poor and defenseless.

Just across the borders of some nations are the wretched camps of refugees whose suffering circumstances are also traceable to man’s inability to keep the commandments of God.

The moral climate in some nations is reminiscent of the prophet Ezekiel’s description of “the bloody city” of Jerusalem:

“Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed

blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. . . .

"The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 22:27, 29).

Peace comes through righteousness

Democracy does not ensure peace. When a nation is governed according to the voice of its people, its actions will mirror the righteousness or wickedness of its people.

We cannot have peace among nations without achieving general righteousness among the people who comprise them. Elder John A. Widtsoe said:

"The only way to build a peaceful community is to build men and women who are lovers and makers of peace. Each individual, by that doctrine of Christ and His Church, holds in his own hands the peace of the world.

"That makes me responsible for the peace of the world, and makes you individually responsible for the peace of the world. The responsibility cannot be shifted to someone else. It cannot be placed upon the shoulders of Congress or Parliament, or any other organization of men with governing authority" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1943, p. 113).

If citizens do not have a basic goodness to govern their actions toward one another, we can never achieve peace in the world. One nation's greed, hatred, or desire for power over another is simply a reflection of the greeds, hatreds, and selfish desires of individuals within that nation.

Conversely, each citizen furthers the cause of world peace when he or she keeps the commandments of God and lives at peace with family and neighbors. Such citizens are living the prayer expressed in the words of a popular song, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me" (Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, "Let There Be Peace on Earth").

The Savior and his Apostles had no program for world peace other than indi-

vidual righteousness. They mounted no opposition to the rule of Rome or to the regime of its local tyrants. They preached individual righteousness and taught that the children of God should love their enemies (see Matthew 5:44) and "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

Recent history reminds us that people who continue to hate one another after a war will have another war, whereas the victor and vanquished who forgive one another will share peace and prosperity.

Peace comes from loving others

Our Church members demonstrated the healing and pacifying power of love in their shipment of food and clothing to relieve the suffering of the German Saints just after World War II. U.S. President Harry S. Truman was amazed when President George Albert Smith told him the supplies would not be sold. "You don't mean you are going to give it to them?" he exclaimed.

President Smith replied simply, "They are our brothers and sisters and are in distress" (in Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977], p. 222).

A few months later, Elder Ezra Taft Benson saw a German member in tears as he ran his fingers through a container of cracked wheat and whispered, "Brother Benson, it is hard for me to believe that people who have never seen us could do so much for us" (in Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], p. 219).

Each person can promote peace

What can one person do to promote world peace? The answer is simple: keep God's commandments and serve his children.

A bishop who seeks to heal a troubled marriage or resolve a personal controversy is working for peace. So is a victim of abuse who is conscientiously

working on the long process of forgiving the transgressor.

Young men and women contribute to peace when they forgo the temporary pleasure of self-gratifying activities and involve themselves in service projects and other acts of kindness.

The most powerful workers for peace may be faithful mothers and fathers. Some of the most terrible crimes committed against humanity are the acts of persons who have been scarred and twisted by the sins of others—often their own parents or others who cared for them. Parents who lovingly care for their own children or shelter foster children and raise them in righteousness are working for peace. So are parents who teach their children in the way King Benjamin counseled, to forgo conflicts and “to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiah 4:15).

Persons who seek to reduce human suffering and persons who work to promote understanding among different peoples are also important workers for peace.

An effort of reconciliation

A personal act of kindness or reconciliation also has an impact for peace. Lincoln’s biographer described such an act. A Union officer applied to his commander-in-chief for permission to leave his regiment to attend to the burial of his wife. Lincoln gruffly refused. Another battle was imminent, and every officer was needed. The next morning President Lincoln reconsidered and granted the request. He went to the room of the grieving man, took his hand, and said:

“My dear Colonel, I was a brute last night. I have no excuse to offer. I was weary to the last extent; but I had no right to treat a man with rudeness who had offered his life for his country, much more a man who came to me in great affliction. I have had a regretful night, and come now to beg your forgiveness” (Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln, The*

War Years, 4 vols. [New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1939], 1:514).

Missionaries work for peace

Our missionaries, young men and women and older couples, are workers for world peace. So are the faithful souls who support them.

Like the church that sends them forth, our missionaries have no political agenda and no specific program for disarmament or reduction of forces. They circulate no petitions, advocate no legislation, support no candidates. They are the Lord’s servants, and his program for world peace depends on righteousness, not rhetoric. His methods involve repentance and reformation, not placards and picketing.

By preaching righteousness, our missionaries seek to treat the causes of war. They preach repentance from personal corruption, greed, and oppression because only by individual reformation can we overcome corruption and oppression by groups or nations. By inviting all to repent and come unto Christ, our missionaries are working for peace in this world by changing the hearts and behavior of individual men and women.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we follow the formula prescribed by the prophet-king Benjamin. He taught that those who receive a remission of their sins through the atonement of Christ are filled with the love of God and the knowledge of that which is just and true. That kind of person “will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably” with all people (Mosiah 4:13).

That is our method, and salvation and peace for all mankind is our goal.

Jesus Christ is our Savior. He has taught us the way to live. If we follow him and have goodwill toward all men, we can have peace on earth.

May God bless all of us in that great effort, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall hear now from Elder Richard G. Scott, also a member of the Council of the Twelve, and he will be followed by Sister Barbara W. Winder, released yesterday as general president of the Relief Society.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Finding the life you want

The purpose of this message is to help many of you find the life you want, not the one you are living.

I speak to you who find yourselves caught in a pattern of life that you neither enjoy nor want. You may publicly profess that all is well and reject the efforts of others to help you with a comment that you know what you are doing and can handle it yourself. Yet, in quiet moments, you know you are miserable, lonely, and sometimes afraid. You avoid thinking too much about what you are doing. The walls seem to close in around you. You are driven by appetites that bring momentary physical response but are followed by periods of deep depression. Let me help you as we reason together.

I need not define your specific problem to help you overcome it. It doesn't matter what it is. If it violates the commandments of the Lord, it comes from Satan, and the Lord can overcome all of Satan's influence through your application of righteous principles.

Please understand that the way back is not as hard as it seems to you now. Satan wants you to think that it is impossible. That is not true. The Savior gave His life so that you can completely overcome the challenges you face (see 2 Nephi 2:6-8).

Change requires honesty

Do you find that when someone mentions the mistakes you're making, you are prone to lie about them, to indicate that they are much less severe than they truly are? Do you admit only to

what is publicly seen and try to hide from others how really bad conditions are? Worst of all, do you lie to yourself, pretending that things are all right when they are not? That attitude prevents you from getting the help you need. It provides an invitation to more serious problems.

When you are honest with yourself, you may feel afraid. To change will require you to take an unfamiliar path, and it is uphill and narrow. The other is so inviting, but it leads to heartache. None of your partners in error will help you onto the upward path. They think only of themselves (see D&C 10:25). You know the result of following their path—unhappiness, failure, disappointment, and greater fear. They don't love you. They want to use you. Don't listen to them.

Listen to the Lord, not Satan

Lucifer will do all in his power to keep you captive. You are familiar with his strategy. He whispers, "No one will ever know." "Just one more time." "You can't change; you have tried before and failed." "It's too late; you've gone too far." Don't let him discourage you.

When you take the path that climbs, that harder path of the Savior, there are rewards along the way. When you do something right, when you resist temptation, when you meet a goal, you will feel very good about it. It is a very different kind of feeling than you have when you violate commandments—an altogether different feeling. It brings a measure of peace and comfort and provides encouragement to press on.

As you pray for help, the Lord will place in your path priesthood leaders who will counsel and friends who will give

support if you'll let them. But remember, they can help only by your following the rules that Christ has set out for the journey. Any lasting improvement must come from your own determination to change (see Mosiah 3:17-20).

If it were possible to make your road very easy, you wouldn't grow in strength. If you were always forgiven for every mistake without effort on your part, you would never receive the blessings of repentance. If everything were done *for* you, you wouldn't learn how to work, or gain self-confidence, or acquire the power to change.

Be faithful and unselfish

Freedom from your transgression will come through sincere faith, true repentance, willing obedience, and the giving of self (see Alma 26:22).

Why the giving of self? Because selfishness is at the root of your problem. Where selfishness and transgression flourish, the Spirit of the Lord can't enter your life to bless you. To succeed, you must conquer your selfishness. When your beacon is focused on self, it does little more than blind your vision. When turned outward through acts of kindness and love, it will light your path to happiness and peace.

Your exercise of faith permits you to call upon the strength of the Lord when you need it. Obedience to His commandments allows that help to be given. The power of God will come into your life because of your faithful obedience to His commandments.

Don't live your life in despair, feeling sorry for yourself because of the mistakes you have made. Let the sunshine in by doing the right things—now (see 1 Nephi 22:26).

Unravel knots step by step

It may be difficult to begin, but pick up the scriptures and immerse yourself in them. Look for favorite passages. Lean on the Master's teachings, on His ser-

vants' testimonies. Refresh your parched soul with the word of God (see 2 Nephi 4:15-16). The scriptures will give you comfort and the strength to overcome (see Helaman 3:29-30).

If you've tangled your ordered life into a ball of knots, it has taken time to get it that way. It is unreasonable to expect to unravel it all at once. Start knot by knot, decision by decision, and be sure that while you are untying the knots, you don't let any more get put there through transgression.

This example suggests how your habit can be overcome.

Suppose a small child were to run in front of your car. What would you do? Careful analysis of each step taken will teach you how to overcome your serious habit:

- First your mind decides to stop. Nothing else can happen until that decision is made.

- Then you take your foot off the accelerator. Can you imagine stopping a car with one foot on the accelerator and the other on the brake?

- Finally you firmly apply the brake.

The same pattern is followed to overcome your entrenched habit. Decide to stop what you are doing that is wrong. Then search out everything in your life that feeds the habit, such as negative thoughts, an unwholesome environment, and your companions in mischief. Systematically eliminate or overcome everything that contributes to that negative part of your life. Then stop the negative things permanently.

Recognize that you'll go through two transition periods. The first is the most difficult. You are caging the tiger that has controlled your life. It will shake the bars, growl, threaten, and cause you some disturbance. But I promise you that this period will pass. How long it takes will depend upon the severity of your transgression, the strength of your determination, and the help you seek from the Lord. But remember, as you stand firm, it will pass.

The second period is not as intense. It is like being on "battle alert" so that you can fend off any enemy attack. That, too, will pass, and you will feel more peace and will have increased control of your life. You will become free.

Find out about the Lord's plan

Once I had a measuring tape that didn't work. I decided to fix it. I began to remove the side cover plate to find what was wrong. In a few moments, I knew I was in trouble. Suddenly, the whole mechanism exploded in my hands. There were tape and spring flying in all directions. My efforts to put it all back together were frustrating and often painful. Irritated, I just about threw the whole thing away. Then I thought, "Someone designed this tape. If I can discover the principles that make it function, I can fix it." With greater patience, I began to examine the mainspring and found that if coiled in a certain way, instead of resisting and complaining, it easily responded. Soon the spring was coiled, carefully placed in its housing, the tape joined, the cover replaced, and it worked perfectly.

So it is with you. When, through violation of God's laws, you cease to function properly, force and compulsion will not restore you. You must search out the Designer's plan. As you follow it, you will become more pliable. You can be "repaired" more easily, and you will function well again under His divine influence.

Decide now to change

The overcoming of serious transgression follows a pattern. First, and most difficult, is the internal battle, the crosscurrent of feeling, the anguish about being found out, the worry about the impact on other lives, and the fear of the unknown. This struggle is prolonged through indecision, and that means more pain and further damage. It can be cut short through decisive personal commitment to clean up your life, now. *Right now.* Once that decision is made, there

follow many individual decisions and acts, none of which is overpowering. Yet, taken together, they will kill the monster that's controlling your life.

The most difficult part about changing is to make an unwavering decision to do it and, when required, to enlist the help of your bishop. Once that beginning is made, you will find the rest of the path becomes easier than you imagined. Some days are more difficult than others, but the process becomes easier because through your use of agency, you qualify for the Lord's help, and He magnifies your efforts (see Omni 1:26).

Establish specific objectives, and move steadily toward them. A rudder won't control a drifting boat; it must be underway. Similarly, you need to be moving forward to gain control of your life.

Satan would have you rationalize—that is, twist something you know to be true into a pattern that appears to support your deviation from truth. Rationalization leads you down blind alleys in life. It drains spiritual power. It barricades the path to happiness because it distorts your understanding of truth. Overcome rationalization with truth and positive decisions. In time, they will form character resistant to the eroding influence you are striving to overcome.

Stay firm to your commitment

When you decide to change and then discover that there is a way to cheat on your promise without anyone's knowing, don't do it. That will destroy your self-confidence and will weaken others' trust in you. It will discourage them from helping you. There is simply nothing good about cheating yourself by being disobedient to trust; there is no positive element of reinforcement that would otherwise come from obedience.

To reach a goal you have never before attained, you must do things you have never before done.

Don't confront your problem armed with only your own experience, understanding, and strength. Count on the in-

nite power of the Lord by deciding *now* to be obedient to His teachings (see 2 Nephi 31:19–21).

If loved ones seem to ignore you, it is because they don't know what to do. Their past attempts to help have been rejected; you have not wanted help. Reach out to them trustingly. Ask for support in your sincere efforts to change. Give them reason to know that this time is different because you will do it the Lord's way.

As you make progress on the way back, you will discover feelings that you haven't had for a long time—feelings of concern for others, feelings of unselfish love, feelings of a desire to be near loved ones, and of self-respect and confidence. These stirrings are evidence of progress, like a growing light at the end of a tunnel.

I wish I could replace your doubt with my certainty, but I can't give it to you. I can provide an invitation: Please, decide now to repent and change your life. I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that He will help you. He will be there in every time of need. He gave His

life so that you can change your life. I promise you that you'll feel His love, strength, and support. Trust Him completely. He is not going to make any mistakes. He knows what He is doing. Please, decide now to change your life. Be obedient to His teachings, and He will bless you. I promise you He will bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Sister Barbara W. Winder, released yesterday as general Relief Society president. She has been called as a missionary to accompany her husband, Richard Winder, in his appointment as president of the Czechoslovakia Prague Mission.

Sister Winder will be followed by Sister Elaine L. Jack, who was sustained yesterday as general Relief Society president.

Barbara W. Winder

My dear brothers and sisters, my heart is full to capacity. As we have been released in the normal rotation of assignments, we want to welcome those who have been newly called and to offer them our love and sincere support.

A time to gather the harvest

Luther Burbank wrote: "Like the year [at the end of summer,] I pause now, toward the end of my allotted time, to glance backward and to gather my harvest of experience and growth and friendship and . . . memory. . . ."

"[And] what has been my 'harvest. . . .?'"

—"The harvest of work accomplished and aims achieved. . . ."

—"The harvested experiences and lessons that have moulded and impressed . . . my . . . life. . . ."

—"[And] the harvest of dear friendships, happy memories. . . ."

"[And] the harvest is rich and heavy and abundant" (*The Harvest of the Years* [Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931], pp. 280–81).

The harvest of work accomplished

The work of Relief Society is focused on the pure and simple part of the gospel, to develop faith and bear testimony; to render compassionate service as we care for the needy; to strengthen our families here and in eternity; and to work with our "hearts knit together in unity and love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:21).

Our harvested experiences and lessons have been molded with many of you.

Your prayers on our behalf have been felt. We are grateful.

Your yearnings and desires shared by letter or visit have become the pleadings of our prayers.

Our assignments and invitations have brought us into your homes, families, and chapels, where we became acutely aware of how much you hunger and thirst after righteousness, for we with you, while we have been there, have been filled with the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 12:6).

We have watched your tender mercies and ministrings to one another.

We have observed priesthood leaders and sisters and auxiliary leaders working together to strengthen families and bring them home to the Savior.

The harvest of happy memories and dear friendships is perhaps the sweetest of all the blessings:

"[For] that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory" (D&C 130:2).

Gratitude for experiences

I am grateful for family support; grateful to have served with capable, committed counselors, general secretary, and board members, as well as officers and board members of our sister organizations, and our devoted, competent staff, volunteers, and hostesses. I am grateful for the support team in the Church offices.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve with our dear General Authorities, noble sons of our Heavenly Father. I have learned from them as I have observed integrity, loyalty, charity, compassion, and a stalwart devotion to Deity. How blessed I feel to have been a part.

Six years ago my husband presided over the California San Diego Mission. We were called home a year early for me to fill this assignment. And now we return to specific missionary work. This

time he will preside over the Czechoslovakia mission, where he labored as a youth.

Time for new challenges

It is humbling to look forward with my husband to yet another challenge. I desire to support him as he has supported me so steadfastly for the past six years. The spirit of missionary work is upon us, even as it was upon the sons of Mosiah:

"They fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them . . . his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring . . . their brethren . . . to the knowledge of the truth" (Alma 17:9).

Recently while we were sitting in a mission presidents' training meeting, the challenges of our California mission flooded back into my mind. And I knew we would again face similar concerns, even with yet unknown problems.

In spite of these unsettled feelings, at the conclusion of the training meeting, I felt an excitement difficult to describe. I might liken it to how we may have felt in the premortal existence as we learned of the gospel plan. We knew there would be adversities in this earth life, yet we shouted for joy at the prospects of being able to come here.

Now our excitement causes us to shout for joy as we gather our resources and prepare for this new opportunity.

I will forever treasure this time in the Relief Society, filled with rich associations and experiences. Indeed, the Lord has allowed the harvest to be abundant, bursting with seed for yet another season. I am humbled and weak but I know with the help of the Lord we can be instruments to accomplish his purposes.

May we all feel his strength as we seek to serve him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Elaine L. Jack

My dear brothers and sisters, first let me affirm my belief in the words of Nephi: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way . . . that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

Without this belief there would be no way to accept the awesome responsibility to serve as Relief Society general president.

Gratitude for others

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the magnificent women who have preceded me in this call—women like Sister Barbara Winder. I am grateful for her influence in my life. In my prayers each day I give thanks for the influence of many good people around me—for friends, for caring neighbors, for the Young Women office staff, and for Sister Jayne Malan and the board members with whom I have a close and cherished relationship.

I feel the love and the great strength that come from my four sons and their families. I appreciate their candor and good humor. In fact, I can hear them now, on both coasts, watching this broadcast and saying, "My mother? Oh, sure!" Yesterday, I was telling our oldest son that President Monson had said that I might be called on for a few remarks today. President Monson had said, "We don't want you to preach a sermon." Dave replied, "Mom, that's what we've been telling you for years!" I am grateful that they have the desire to do what's right.

I give thanks for my sister, who is my friend. Blessed is she who has one like her and thrice blessed if more than one. Sister Ardeth Kapp is like a sister to me. I pay tribute to her as a great woman of vision, called by the Lord to lead the

Young Women around the world at a most critical time. She has tutored me, encouraged me, and allowed me to grow. I have served happily as a counselor in the Young Women organization.

I love you young women. I know that you are understanding the importance of the Young Women Values—those gospel principles which help prepare you to make and keep sacred covenants.

No one who is as committed to home and family and personal growth as I could serve in this calling without the love and support of a husband who is devoted to the gospel. Joe is devoted, and he brings great strength and stability into my life.

Testimony

I know that Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God. I will follow his counsel and the counsel of those Brethren who have been called to serve with him. I know that Jesus is the Christ, and that he will direct my path if I make myself worthy of his guidance.

I believe that the women of the Church have a unique contribution to make. In the words of a modern-day prophet: "Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days . . . will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that [they] are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, pp. 103–4).

This is a joyous gospel!

My counselors and I look forward eagerly to serving. And we want to serve in a way that will help women everywhere contribute to the great forward movement of the Church. I know that in the strength of the Lord we can do all things required of us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Sister Barbara W. Winder and Sister Elaine Jack.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elders

Horacio A. Tenorio and Merlin R. Lybbert of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Horacio A. Tenorio

Heavenly Father's plan

Our Heavenly Father loves us dearly and watches over us in all our needs and cares, following us through life step by step.

He established the plan for us as His children to come to earth and to continue our progress which we began at His side. When we were with him, we enjoyed his teachings, his counsel, and even his reprimands, like children whose parents watch over and guide them carefully.

As his children, we attained a degree of knowledge wherein our Father decided that we needed another sphere and another means to continue progressing, exercising our free agency and making our own decisions beyond His presence.

But not having Him with us does not mean that He has left us alone. He is concerned about each of us during this probationary period. He provided us a Savior, a Redeemer, a Shepherd. He has also given us the opportunity of having a constant companion, the Holy Ghost, and the scriptures and teachings of living prophets.

Life's teachings and experiences

We are not alone. He attempts to teach us in all things. Many, many such teachings come to us from each and every creature in creation. A tiny ant teaches us about industriousness and hard work. A bee teaches us about organization and foresight. We learn additional lessons from flowers, plants, and all of nature. We only need to open up an en-

cyclopedia or a textbook and we will discover wonderful things about the great works of our Heavenly Father. All of these things will help us in one way or another to direct our lives along the proper path.

But the most important teachings, aside from the scriptures, we receive through our own lives and experiences. These are the most important because they affect us directly and they touch us personally. In fact, those which teach us the most are those which are the most difficult challenges or trials for us as individuals. This is when, if we are susceptible to the Spirit and have faith, we can see the hand of God reaching out personally to each of his children.

We learn from obstacles

Problems form an important part of our lives. They are placed in our path for us to overcome them, not to be overcome by them. We must master them, not let them master us. Every time we overcome a challenge, we grow in experience, in self-assuredness, and in faith.

In the 100-meter hurdles race, runners must jump over hurdles placed in their path. The hurdles are not there so that a runner will come to them and stop and, discouraged, go back to the starting line. They are not there to make him crash. The beauty and excitement of this race is to jump over the hurdles, to overcome the obstacles.

If we understand the importance of the obstacles in our individual lives, we begin to see them in a positive light as true challenges to overcome.

Young people on a mission learn this. I have seen many of them bear their testimonies as they leave their missions, thankful for "wonderful problems."

The purpose of challenges

Challenges are true opportunities to obtain blessings which are received by overcoming, through faith, and by discerning what the Spirit and the Savior want to teach us.

Many people complain or murmur when trials, illness, accidents, loss of employment, or death come. They say, "Why me? This isn't fair," or they become so depressed that they suffer breakdowns from which it is difficult to recover.

Another reason for our trials is taught in Doctrine and Covenants 29:39: "And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet."

Learning from hard trials

A short time ago, our family had the opportunity to be taught. It was a painful trial, but it became a sweet experience. Last December my wife and I were together with our three daughters. The oldest is married and lives in the state of Delaware. She came to visit us with her husband and three little children. The youngest of her children is David, fifteen months old, who is also the youngest of our four grandchildren. The days of their visit were beautiful and unforgettable. We enjoyed ourselves immensely as a family, and it was an opportunity to get to know David, whom we had only seen at birth. David is an extremely sweet child, the best I have ever known. He never cries, even when sick or in pain. He is independent but very loving—a special spirit.

Those days together came to an end, and my daughter's family returned home. Two days after they arrived, tragically

David had to be taken to the hospital, and four hours later he died.

My wife and I immediately left to be with our children at this difficult time. We flew all night, and it was painful for us to talk about what had happened. We spent long waking hours in thought and prayer. I didn't know how I could comfort our children. What could I say when I, myself, felt such deep pain? So I prayed a great deal, and a loving Father came to my aid. The answers came one by one at the appropriate time, fulfilling the Lord's promise: "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

We met our children, who were in deep mourning. They were suffering so intensely that their pain did not allow them to see the purposes and teachings. They are faithful members of the Church, but as young people they never expected anything so devastating.

My wife and I shared the answers that we had, and they, upon understanding and accepting them, began to receive further answers, additional teachings which brought peace to their hearts.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:22–23).

The sense of pain and suffering diminished, leaving in its place sweet feelings from the Spirit.

I was amazed at the way our children went through the difficulty of the funeral with such calmness and sweetness. They showed great strength and even comforted other relatives and friends.

We can always rely on God's love

How was this wonderful change made possible?

Because we realize that God lives and, as our Father, he loves us. He

doesn't want us to suffer any harm. If David went away, it was because as a special spirit he had no need to remain longer in this life. We realize that David is needed in another place. It was a blessing to know him and to have him in our family. We have not lost him; we will be able to see him again. We should remember fondly the time that we spent with David. He taught us what it means to be pure and clean before God, and he is an example for all of us. We need to place our lives in proper perspective in order to be worthy to see him again. Because of him, we think more about life beyond the veil and have been taught to recognize what is truly important in this life and the

life to come—keeping our families united eternally.

So many blessings, so many teachings! We changed and grew during that time. How grateful we are to our Father in Heaven for this experience.

A few days after David left us, my daughter learned that she was pregnant again. So much love from our Father! Additional teachings. I testify that our teacher, our Shepherd, is Christ, our best friend, who clears up all our doubts. He heals our wounds and turns our pain into sweet experiences. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Merlin R. Lybbert

My dear brothers and sisters, there is a feeling of deep appreciation in my soul this afternoon as we worship together. On behalf of the members of the Church in Asia, where we are now serving, I extend their love to President Benson, to the other leaders that they have come to know and love, and to all of the members of the Church everywhere. It is a joy to serve among them.

I also express my love and appreciation to my family and my aging parents for their unswerving support.

How we gain eternal life

When I measure myself against the enormity of the work before us, an overwhelming sense of humility washes over me. I have come to know that the work of the salvation of mankind is beyond the capacity of any man. It is indeed the work of God.

One of the best-known parables of the Savior is the story we have come to know as the good Samaritan. As related by Luke, a certain lawyer tempted Jesus, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25).

In New Testament times a lawyer was the "equivalent [of a] 'scribe,' . . .

who was by profession a student and teacher of the law, including the written law of the Pentateuch, and also 'the traditions of the elders'" (Bible Dictionary, s.v. *Lawyer*).

This learned man sought either to test the Lord concerning His knowledge of the law or to display his own. The Savior responded with a question: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:26).

The scholar responded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (10:27).

Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (10:28).

The answer to the inquiry was solicited from his own mouth through the questioning of the Lord, who then directed him to live in accordance with what he knew. However, the scholar was not satisfied with so simple a response. Luke records that the learned man, "willing to justify himself," asked a further question of the Lord, "Who is my neighbour?" (10:29). And Jesus answered by telling a story:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among

thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:30-35).

Additional insight to the parable

Understanding of this parable is improved when we recall that the "work of ministering in the sanctuary was assigned to [the tribe of Levi]." The Levite's duty was to assist the priests in their religious services. Likewise, the essential responsibility of a priest was to serve as a "mediator between his people and God by representing them officially in worship and sacrifice" (Bible Dictionary, s.vv. *Levites* and *Priests*).

The people of Samaria consisted of a mixed population of Israelites and Gentiles. The Jews despised them. The priest and the Levite refused aid to the half-dead man who was in obvious need, and even distanced themselves from him by walking on the "other side." It was the despised Samaritan who had compassion on the wounded fellow. He tenderly bound up his wounds, administered soothing oil, disinfected his wounds, placed him upon his own beast and took him to an inn, and stayed with him overnight. He then paid the cost of his care and assured the host that whatever more was spent would be repaid.

The Savior then asked a further question of the scholar, "Which now of

these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" (Luke 10:36).

The lawyer was caught in his own cunning, but accurately answered, "He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (10:37).

This was the second time in this brief conversation the scholar of religious law was instructed by the Savior to live in accordance with his knowledge of the principles.

Our responsibilities to others

I presume that most of us have visualized this parable as requiring our aid to an injured person, even a stranger, who is in need because of an injury or sickness. The beauty of the parables of the Lord is that they have many applications, and thus their teaching value is unending. I would like to suggest an application of the principles taught in this parable to a current setting.

There are many of God's children who are wounded or sick in spirit. Many once enjoyed fellowship with the body of the Saints, but for one reason or another are now on the roadside. They are the less active among us. Generally, we know who they are and have association with them in various settings, but because they are not physically sick or injured, we too often play the part of the priest or the Levite and walk by "on the other side."

In this dramatic parable, Jesus contrasted the response of the two respected religionists with that of a despised citizen of Samaria. There is at least a scintilla of similarity here to an elders quorum president, a high priests group leader, a member of the bishopric, or a home teacher and to the less-active brother or sister who has fallen inactive by the wayside. Perhaps we do not despise them, but we sometimes ignore them or otherwise disregard them. Each of us can be a good Samaritan by dealing compassionately with these neglected brothers and sisters.

We can bind up their spiritual wounds by rendering needed service, pouring in the soothing oil of friendship and supplying the soul-healing balm of genuine brotherly and sisterly love. We can set them in our own automobiles and accompany them to our homes and places of worship, devote the necessary time and attention to warmly fellowship them. The good Samaritan spent the night with his wounded friend and stayed with him until satisfied that he was on his way to recovery. Similarly, we ought to become close enough to these less-active brothers and sisters to truly become their friends and support and sustain them while they spiritually heal.

Act out of love, not duty

This parable also teaches that a little sacrifice and investment of one's time and money may be necessary. Such healing care should not be given out of duty, but rendered out of a full heart. Indeed, even the lawyer seemed to catch the spirit of the Lord's teachings in the parable, because it was he who defined a neighbor as "he that shewed mercy" (Luke 10:37).

Most of us are acquainted with someone who is spiritually ill or wounded, lying on the roadside half dead, and who desperately needs the assistance of a good LDS brother or sister—that is, a *latter-day Samaritan*.

Our prophet has repeatedly reminded us that rescuing the less active is one of our greatest challenges of service.

I recount a simple parable, as told through an interpreter by a Sunday School president in Hong Kong:

"An enterprising turkey gathered the flock together and, following instructions and demonstrations, taught them how to fly. All afternoon they enjoyed soaring and flying and the thrill of seeing new vistas. After the meeting, all of the turkeys walked home."

It is not our understanding of the principles of the gospel that brings the blessings of heaven, but the living of them.

I pray that each of us will develop a receptive and understanding heart that will motivate us to seek out a less-active brother or sister and truly become a good latter-day Samaritan. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elders Horacio H. Tenorio and Merlin R. Lybbert of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder H. Burke Peterson of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder H. Burke Peterson

My brothers and sisters, I am mindful that there are many who are struggling with faith and testimony. Some have even laid aside celestial pursuits because of weariness in the battle. I pray that I might be guided in my efforts to help.

Build a sure foundation

Some thirty or forty years before the birth of the Savior, a wise father called

his sons together and gave them counsel. His name was Helaman. His sons were Nephi and Lehi. He said to them:

"And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, *that ye must build your foundation*; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, . . . when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down" (Helaman 5:12; italics added).

Simply stated, he told his sons if they would pursue the course and gain a testimony of the divinity of the Lord, Jesus Christ, there would be no test or trial come to them in life that they could not conquer.

As we pursue the building of this sure foundation, I am fearful that some of us may have lost sight of our divine responsibility to nurture each other in this process.

Prepare hearts for testimonies

It is a fact that at times we can force, coerce, or intimidate individuals into obedience. There are even times when we are somewhat successful in manipulating the human mind. We do not, however, have the capacity to force matters of the heart:

We cannot force love and respect and admiration.

We cannot force faith and testimony of truth.

Even though we cannot force those things that matter most, there are ways we can help one another. That is, *we can prepare hearts* to obtain a deep and abiding testimony that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

This principle of first preparing hearts applies in a wide variety of personal relationships, such as between friends and neighbors and co-workers as well as husbands and wives and children. Let's look at some of the ways we can nurture a heart so that a testimony can take root and grow.

If your home is a home where family members are loved unconditionally, regardless of behavior, then your home will have a spirit of warmth that will prepare the heart to receive the testimony of truth. When children and teenagers are loved because of who they are and not for how they behave, only then can we begin to help make much-needed changes in behavior. For example, a teenager who feels accepted will be more likely to choose wholesome friends.

Look for the good in others

Now, you may think, "I would like to love my family and friends and neighbors unconditionally, but sometimes it is extremely difficult. How can I learn to feel that pure love?" Here are some guidelines:

First, look for the good in each person, and mention it in a sincere and consistent way. It is amazing how hearts can be softened, testimonies implanted, and relationships improved when we begin to give a daily portion of heartfelt appreciation. It has a marvelous effect on preparing the spirit. Even mentioning a little thing will have a positive effect. It usually isn't earth-shaking—just a simple act or attribute that will blossom and be multiplied if it is noticed. (By the way, it may take you all day to find something, but it is there.)

One day after school, one of our daughters came into a teenage son's room. It looked as if a big wind had blown through. He was sitting in the midst of it all. She felt the anger rising within, but remembered her resolution to look for the good. Searching desperately, her eye finally looked upward. "Your ceiling's really clean, Adam!" She was able to say quite honestly. He laughed; he got the message, and he cleaned up the room.

When marriage partners practice looking beyond the faults and failings of each other and peer into the deeper recesses of the heart, then we find a marvelous strengthening of marriage relationships.

Hold back judgments and criticism

Another way of preparing the heart of someone is to create an atmosphere where judging is held in reserve until anger has subsided, until the hurt has dissipated, until all sides of an issue have been explored. Criticism is a *destroyer* of self-worth and esteem. It is demeaning and cutting.

Some husbands expect perfection, and when this is not attained, their expressions turn to criticism. One wife

wrote, "Life can be such a lonely struggle for a woman in this situation—[when there is] one who reminds her continually of her failings, letting her know she is not living up to his expectations. How can a woman feel she'll ever become what our Heavenly Father expects of her when, no matter how hard she tries, she never pleases her husband?"

It is heartbreaking how criticism can wound children and diminish their self-esteem. In one family, home evenings were discontinued because members of the family became discouraged by the contention. The father, who may have been conscientious about his responsibility to help his family improve, unwisely used most of the time to find fault with family members. Even though he made some effort to praise the children, it was not enough to offset his criticism.

A feeling of censure and dislike for her roommate welled within a young college student's heart. When she made the effort to look a little further, she came to realize that the annoying habits practiced by her roommate were actually appropriate expressions of a different cultural heritage.

A kind priesthood bearer—or any individual in a position to influence another—realizes that the power to influence others for good comes through love and praise and patience. In relationships where there is forgetting and forgiving, joy and trust are nurtured.

Listen to and pray for each other

As you develop your capacity to love unconditionally, remember that listening is a part of showing love. If your home is a home where children are listened to, even when what they say doesn't seem important or you don't feel you have time, then you are preparing hearts. Can we listen openly to a shocking experience without going into a state of shock ourselves, or without an immediate verbal overreaction? We all know there is a time to talk and a time to listen. To listen with patience to a young person's reasons for getting home late will

bring you undying gratitude. Remember, you can listen to understand, not necessarily to agree. Ofttimes we do our best teaching when we listen. Husband-and-wife relationships are nourished and strengthened as we listen to each other more. Hearts are softened.

Finally, love is spoken in prayer. In your home, do children hear their parents pray for them in specific ways? For instance, when Kami is sick, she can hear the family pray she will have the Lord's healing influence. When Cameron needs a job, it will help him to hear the prayers of his family express confidence in him. If in your home children hear their parents pray for each other daily, then your home is a faith-building home. In it, hearts can be changed, and those who live there may become the children of Christ.

Covenant to do good continually

Following the marvelous words of instruction by King Benjamin, as they are recorded in the first few chapters of Mosiah, we learn that "he sent among them, desiring to know of his people, if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them" (Mosiah 5:1). At the conclusion of this marvelous two days of general conference, I would hope, if we were asked, our response to such a question would be as was theirs in that day, for they said:

"Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. . . .

"And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments" (Mosiah 5:2, 5).

And King Benjamin said unto them: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath

spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed *through faith on his name*; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.

“And under this head ye are made free. . . . I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ . . . that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives” (Mosiah 5:7–8; italics added).

To this, brothers and sisters, I add my testimony of the divinity of the Lord

Jesus Christ. He is our Savior, and he is our Redeemer, and he lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elder H. Burke Peterson of the Seventy.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder James E. Faust

In the closing moments of this conference, I come to this pulpit to speak about gratitude as an expression of faith and as a saving principle. The Lord has said, “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments” (D&C 59:21). It is clear to me from this scripture that to “thank the Lord thy God in all things” (D&C 59:7) is more than a social courtesy; it is a binding commandment.

Gratitude for simple things

One of the advantages of having lived a long time is that you can often remember when you had it worse. I am grateful to have lived long enough to have known some of the blessings of adversity. My memory goes back to the Great Depression, when we had certain values burned into our souls. One of these values was gratitude for that which we had because we had so little. The Great Depression in the United States in the early thirties was a terrible schoolmaster. We had to learn provident living in order to survive. Rather than create in us a spirit of envy or anger for what we did not have, it developed in many a spirit of gratitude for the meager, simple things with which we were

blessed, like hot, homemade bread and oatmeal cereal and many other things.

As another example, I remember my beloved grandmother Mary Caroline Roper Finlinson making homemade soap on the farm. Her recipe for homemade soap included rendered animal fat, a small portion of lye as a cleansing agent, and wood ashes as an abrasive. The soap had a very pungent aroma and was almost as hard as a brick. There was no money to buy soft, sweet-smelling soap. On the farm, there were many dusty, sweat-laden clothes to be washed and many bodies that needed desperately a Saturday night bath. If you had to bathe with that homemade soap, you could become wonderfully clean, but you smelled worse after bathing than before. Since I use soap more now than I did as a child, I have developed a daily appreciation for mild, sweet-scented soap.

One of the evils of our time is taking for granted so many of the things we enjoy. This was spoken of by the Lord: “For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift?” (D&C 88:33). The Apostle Paul described our day to Timothy when he wrote that in the last days “men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:2). These sins are fellow travelers, and ingratitude makes one susceptible to all of them.

The grateful Samaritan

The story of the thankful Samaritan has great meaning. As the Savior went through Samaria and Galilee, "he entered into a certain village, [and] there met him ten men that were lepers" and who "lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus told them to go show themselves unto the priest.

"And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

"And fell down . . . at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

"There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

"And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:12-19).

Leprosy was so loathsome a disease that those afflicted were not permitted under the law to come close to Jesus. Those suffering from this terrible disease were required to agonize together, sharing their common misery (see Leviticus 13:45-46). Their forlorn cry, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" must have touched the Savior's heart. When they were healed and when they had received priestly approval that they were clean and acceptable in society, they must have been overcome with joy and amazement. Having received so great a miracle, they seemed completely satisfied. But they forgot their benefactor. It is difficult to understand why they were so lacking in gratitude. Such ingratitude is self-centered. It is a form of pride. What is the significance of the fact that the one who returned to give thanks was a Samaritan? As in the story of the good Samaritan, the point seems to be that those of lesser social or economic status often rise to a greater duty and nobility.

Gratitude for gospel blessings

In addition to personal gratitude as a

saving principle, I should like to express a feeling for the gratitude we ought to have for the many blessings we enjoy.

Those of you who have joined the Church in this generation have acquired fellowship with a people, many of whom have a great heritage of great suffering and sacrifice. Such sacrifice becomes your heritage also, for it is the inheritance of a people who have faults and imperfections but have a great nobility of purpose. That purpose is to help all mankind come to a sweet, peaceful understanding about who they are, and to foster a love for their fellowmen and a determination to keep the commandments of God. This is the gospel's holy call. It is the essence of our worship.

Without question, we need to be informed of the happenings of the world. But modern communication brings into our homes a drowning cascade of the violence and misery of the worldwide human race. There comes a time when we need to find some peaceful spiritual renewal.

I acknowledge with great gratitude the peace and contentment we can find for ourselves in the spiritual cocoons of our homes, our sacrament meetings, and our holy temples. In these peaceful environments, our souls are rested. We have the feeling of having come home.

The gratitude of a king

Some time ago, we were in the kingdom of Tonga. A family home evening, with music and spoken word, was arranged by President Muti in his stake center. The home evening was in honor of his majesty King Tupou the Fourth, the reigning monarch of Tonga. The king, his daughter, and granddaughters graciously attended, as did many of the nobles and diplomatic representatives in Tonga. Our members put on a superb program of song and verse. One of the king's granddaughters sang a little solo entitled "How Much I Love My Grandfather." Elder John Sonnenberg and I were invited to respond briefly, which we were pleased to do.

After the program was over, the king ignored the usual royal protocol and came over to graciously greet us and our wives as an expression of appreciation for the performance of his subjects who are members of the Church. Social protocol is observed in many places, but the expression of kindness is universally appropriate.

Gratitude leads to greatness

It seems as though there is a tug-of-war between opposing character traits that leaves no voids in our souls. As gratitude is absent or disappears, rebellion often enters and fills the vacuum. I do not speak of rebellion against civil oppression. I refer to rebellion against moral cleanliness, beauty, decency, honesty, reverence, and respect for parental authority.

A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. It is an expression of humility. It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness, love, and well-being.

But there is a truism associated with all types of human strength: "Use it or lose it." When not used, muscles weaken, skills deteriorate, and faith disappears. President Thomas S. Monson stated: "Think to thank. In these three words are the finest capsule course for a happy marriage, a formula for enduring friendship, and a pattern for personal happiness" (*Pathways to Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], p. 254). Said the Lord, "And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more" (D&C 78:19).

Caring for little children

I am grateful for people on the earth who love and appreciate little children. Last year I found myself late at night on an airplane bulging with passengers going north from Mexico City to Culiacan. The seats in the plane were close together, and every seat was taken, mostly

by the gracious people of Mexico. Everywhere inside the plane there were packages and carry-on luggage of all sizes.

A young woman came down the aisle with four small children, the oldest of which appeared to be about four and the youngest a newborn. She was also trying to manage a diaper bag and a stroller and some bags. The children were tired, crying, and fussing. As she found her seat in the airplane, the passengers around her, both men and women, literally sprang to her aid. Soon the children were being lovingly and tenderly comforted and cared for by the passengers. They were passed from one passenger to another all over the airplane.

The result was an airplane full of baby-sitters. The children settled down in the caring arms of those who cradled them and, before long, went to sleep. Most remarkable was that a few men who were obviously fathers and grandfathers tenderly cradled and caressed the newborn child without any false, macho pride. The mother was freed from the care of her children most of the flight.

The only thing that I felt bad about was that no one passed the baby to me! I relearned that appreciation for and thoughtfulness and kindness to little children are an expression of the Savior's love for them.

Gratitude for a pioneer heritage

How can we pay our debt of gratitude for the heritage of faith demonstrated by pioneers in many lands across the earth who struggled and sacrificed so that the gospel might take root? How is thankfulness expressed for the intrepid handcart pioneers who, by their own brute strength, pulled their meager belongings in handcarts across the scorching plains and through the snows of the high mountain passes to escape persecution and find peaceful worship in these valleys? How can the debt of gratitude possibly be paid by the descendants of the Martin and the Willie and the other handcart companies for the faith of their forebears?

One of these intrepid souls was Emma Batchelor, a young English girl traveling without family. She started out with the Willie handcart company, but by the time they reached Fort Laramie, they were ordered to lighten their loads. Emma was directed to leave the copper kettle in which she carried all of her belongings.

She refused to do this and set it by the side of the road and sat down on it. She knew that the Martin company was only a few days behind. She had been privileged to start with the Willie company, and when the Martin company caught up, she joined the Paul Gourley family.

A young son wrote many years later: "Here we were joined by Sister Emma Batchelor. We were glad to have her because she was young and strong and meant more flour for our mess." It was here that Sister Gourley gave birth to a child, and Emma acted as the midwife and loaded the mother and the child in the cart for two days, which Emma helped pull.

Those who died in the Martin company were mercifully relieved of the suffering of others with frozen feet, ears, noses, or fingers—which maimed them for the rest of their lives. Emma, age twenty-one, however, was a fortunate one. She came through the ordeal whole.

A year later, she met Brigham Young, who was surprised that she was not maimed, and she told him, "Brother Brigham, I had no one to care for me or to look out for me, so I decided I must look out for myself. I was the one who called out when Brother Savage warned us [not to go]. I was at fault in that, but I tried to make up for it. I pulled my share at the cart every day. When we came to a stream, I stopped and took off my shoes and stockings and outer skirt and put them on top of the cart. Then, after I got the cart across, I came back and carried little Paul over on my back. Then I sat down and scrubbed my feet hard with my woolen neckerchief and put on dry shoes and stockings."

The descendants of these pioneers can partially settle the account by being

true to the cause for which their ancestors suffered so much to be part of.

As with all commandments, gratitude is a description of a successful mode of living. The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us. President J. Reuben Clark said, "Hold fast to the blessings which God has provided for you. Yours is not the task to gain them, they are here; yours is the part of cherishing them" (*Church News*, 14 June 1969, p. 2). As we come to the close of this great conference, I hope that we may cultivate grateful hearts so that we may cherish the multitude of blessings that God has so graciously bestowed. May we openly express such gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our fellowmen, I pray in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Before hearing the closing remarks of President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, we express appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, Primary children's choir, combined institute men's choir, and the Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music throughout this conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society, the doctors and Church health unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, the ushers and interpreters, and those who are responsible for the beautiful flowers on the stand and on Temple Square where much of the lawn space has been utilized during each session.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference. We are grateful for the owners and the operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available

to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Following President Hinckley's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Gerald E. Melchin of the Seventy, and the conference will stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren and sisters, traditionally the President of the Church, at the close of the conference, has offered words of benediction. President Benson, who is now in his ninety-first year, feels that he could not stand and address us, but I wish to say that we have been greatly uplifted by his very presence, with his smile and the wave of a hand as an expression of love.

Words from President Benson

May I, in conclusion, read some of the words he has said in the past on this occasion and from this pulpit.

"I commend my Brethren . . . for the excellent addresses they have given. My humble prayer is that all of us will follow the counsel and instruction we have received.

"As we have felt the Spirit and made new and sacred resolves, may we now have the courage and fortitude to carry out those resolves" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, p. 97; or *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 84).

"We should like to reaffirm to all the world that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We believe in Christ. We accept and affirm His teachings as revealed truths from God. We know Him to be the literal Son of God. We love Him as our resurrected Lord and Savior.

"We believe there is 'none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12).

"So we invite all men, as the Book of Mormon declares, to 'Come unto Christ, and be [redeemed] in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your [heart], mind and

strength' (Moroni 10:32)" (*Ensign*, Dec. 1985, p. 5).

The testimony of the prophet

"I bear witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world—the very Son of God.

"He was *born* the babe of Bethlehem.

"He *lived* and ministered among men.

"He was *crucified* on Calvary.

"His friends *deserted* Him.

"His closest associates did not fully *understand* his mission, and they *doubted*. One of the most trusted *denied* knowing Him. . . .

"He asked *forgiveness* for His tormentors and then willingly gave up his life.

"His body was *laid* in a borrowed tomb.

"An immense stone was placed over the opening.

"In the minds of his stunned followers over and over echoed some of his last words, ' . . . be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' [John 16:33]" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, p. 119).

Thoughts of love and blessing

Last Thursday, in a meeting in the temple of all of the General Authorities, where we bore testimonies one to another and partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, President Benson stood before his brethren and said with conviction and emotion, "I love you, my brethren. I bless you in your great ministry."

Every man there was deeply touched as he felt of the spirit of our great leader. As we close this conference, I am confi-

dent he would have me say to each of you in his behalf, "I love you, my brethren and sisters. I bless you in the great work which you are doing in living the gospel of Jesus Christ and in carrying out His teachings."

To these words of his I add my own testimony that God our Eternal Father lives; that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father born in the flesh, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, who offered His life on Calvary's cross in atonement for the sins of all mankind; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God; and that every man who has succeeded him in the office of the Presi-

dency of this Church has been a living prophet—including Ezra Taft Benson, whom we love and for whom we pray as the Lord's anointed in our day and time. Of these things I testify and leave my blessings. May God be with you and bless you as you travel to your homes, and may His guiding light be the lodestar of your lives, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder Gerald E. Melchin offered the benediction.

Summary of Conference Music

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region, conducted by Glenda C. Nordfelt.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a combined men's choir from the Ephraim, Orem, Salt Lake, Salt Lake Community College, Ogden, and Logan institutes, conducted by Douglas Brenchley.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

F. Michael Watson
Clerk of the conference

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